

HMM

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Jeremy Enigk
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The Almost
A Love Ends Suicide
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THE HARD MUSIC MAGAZINE



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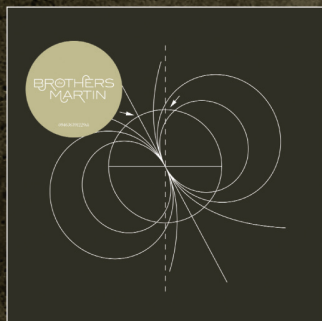
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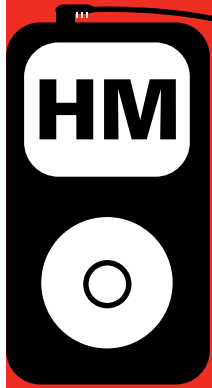
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From the editor

Doug Van Pelt

JUST METAL, BABY!

Oakland Raiders owner Al Davis made the following motto famous: "Just win, baby!" They also used the phrase "Speed Kills" as a slogan for their play. The Showdown utilizes old-fashioned speed and heavy metal to entertain and pummel their audiences for a real good time. It's a blast to highlight a band like this, whose twin guitar talents certainly make a way for them. One of our riskier ventures last year was putting Thrice on the cover of our "GMA issue," but it seemed to be a good risk to take.

I'm really enjoying Thrice frontman Dustin Kensrue's solo album, which we're also highlighting this issue. Listening to all the classic MxPx material was fun, as was watching a lot of their videos. Seeing the Demon Hunter bonus DVD footage was endearing as well. And that old Johnny Cash documentary on his San Quentin gig was cool. The idea for this retro article on The Prayer Chain was just brought to us by the writer, Mike Postma, who thought they deserved some respect and attention. We couldn't agree more. And speaking of writers, this editor did the unthinkable and attributed that In Reverent Fear article to the wrong writer! Yikes! I wanted to crawl under Darrell K. Royal Memorial Stadium after that mistake was pointed out! The real author of that piece was Tim Hallila, who actually refused my offer of a UT football game ticket to make up for the snafu. Ah, well.

Please pay attention to our advertisers and consider giving them some of your business. And if you haven't checked out the HM Magazine Podcast yet, what are you waiting for? It's free, and all you need is your computer & internet connection. Go for it! And for those of you who get this before the holiday, have a blessed and Merry Christmas! For those who get this afterwards, have a blessed and Happy New Year!

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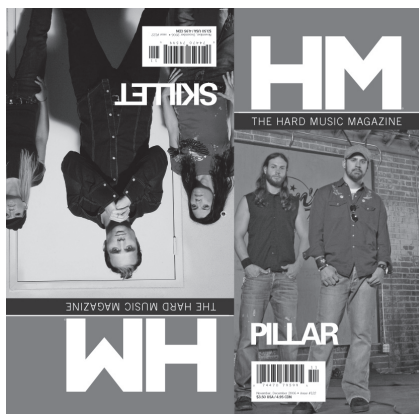
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SPINNING AT HM NOW

AVERY PKWY	<i>You Have The Roadmap</i>	Smooth, melodic beauty rock.
CALEB ROWDEN	<i>Free From Ordinary</i>	Close to cCm lite, but with depth.
PILOT SPEED	<i>Into The West</i>	Interesting lyrics in "Barely Listening."
MINDY SMITH	<i>Long Island Shores</i>	What a charming voice!
LYRYCYST	<i>American Dream</i>	Kearney-influenced, Jazzy Hip-Hop.
SWITCHFOOT	<i>Oh! Gravity</i>	It's hard to argue with their sound.
WEIRD AL...	<i>Straight Outta...</i>	Mostly originals, all funny, one annoying.

Letters to the Editor

HM



CHEVY CHASING

Great magazine, it's a sweet thing to get in my PO. It's a must-savor-with-every-page experience... Anyway, in your Skillet article (very good by the way), you mentioned your transpo was a Dodge Cavalier... Now I am not upset (mainly due to me being part of the import scene), but I guess I have a quasi-pet peeve about makes and models of cars... So, I'm assuming that you drove a Chevy Cavalier... No biggie, I have no idea why I should point this out except for what I've already said... Keep up the good work! Peace & Love from God above.

—Nathanael Vitkus, via internet

Ed – Sorry for the factual error. It was a rental, and author/driver Kelly Benson assures me that she fixed that error in one of our proofing stages, which I apparently missed.

ARE SIGUR ROS BAPTISTS?

This is my bi-monthly Thank You e-mail for the CD sampler in the latest issue. When I pay my subscription each time, it is for your magazine. I certainly don't expect a CD. This is much appreciated bonus and I want you to know this. I know you enjoy all styles of music. I came about a band from Iceland last week named Sigur Ros. Have you heard of them? Doug, this music is epic and cuts to your very soul. It is the most awesome music lately that I have heard. It is so easy to worship God through their 7-10 minute songs. Truly amazing. (If you have mentioned this band in previous issues, or reviewed their stuff, I apologize. Now that I am familiar, I look to learn more about these guys through HM and other rags.

—Bill Cavanaugh, via internet

Ed – That's so cool to hear. Yeah, Sigur Ros is awesome. I don't have any info that would lead me to believe they're believers. Of course, this doesn't diminish the power of worship, it's just that we're not likely to cover them in HM Magazine without some sort of information otherwise.

BEST ONE EVER!!

You better console your mother. She is so upset that your printers printed half the magazine upside down. I tried to tell her different, but the tears just kept flowing and I couldn't get through.

—Larry Van Pelt, via internet

Ed – Just buy her the new Sigur Ros album. That'll calm her mind.

FLIPPING OUT!

I really like the new issue!! Very cool having the back to back cover. You mentioned in there that this was the first time doing that?? Cool. In case you haven't heard their stuff, I bought that Catherine CD (on Rise Records) where you advertised them with a couple of other bands on the very first two pages. Sounded pretty cool. I like the Mastodon/Mortification interviews, too! Here is something I wanted to ask: About your HM Podcast, do I have to have an iPod or any of those type of electronics to hear what's going on with that or listen to whatever is on there? And HM Downloads. Could you tell about that and how I can use it? Finally, please pray for our Government and the politicians that our country voted for! If God really provided us these voted officials, something good or so can happen. Right? I need to place my mind in the right lane for our people. Peace,

—Joel Pokorny, via internet

Ed – Thanks for the encouragement. The only electronics you really need to hear the podcast is a computer with an internet connection. Same with the HMdownloads.com site. It's just a download store we added, where you can pick up just about anything we review (and beyond). Thanks for the biblical reminder to pray for our leaders.

SAMPLE ME THIS

I think it is extremely awesome that you put Skillet AND Pillar both on the magazine. I read the feedback, though, from some guy who didn't like the last sampler CD. At first I didn't really like it as much as other sampler CDs, but after several listens I like it a lot. I love the fact that HM magazine brings absolutely the best music. Rock on!

—Luke Decker, via internet

Ed – Cool. How would you compare it to the Takk album by Sigur Ros?

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SCRIPTURE "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness." (2 Timothy 3:16)

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HM Magazine is dependently owned and operated (Psalm 62)

Printed in the U.S.

HM Magazine (ISSN 1066-6923) is published bi-monthly for \$15 per year by HM, 1660 CR 424, Taylor, TX 76574. Periodicals Postage Paid at Taylor, Texas and at additional mailing office.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: HM, PO Box 367, Hutto TX 78634-0367

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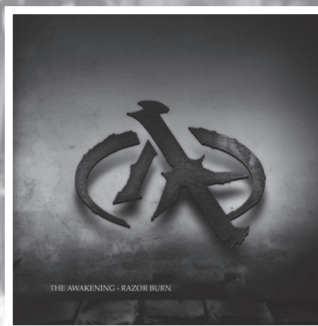


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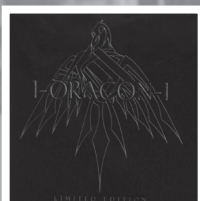


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HARDNEWS

Quick & concise

ZAO

THE BAND GETS ALL ZOMBIE ON US...

Zao have released the first video from their latest record, *The Fear Is What Keeps Us Here*. The song is called "My Love My Love (We've Come Back From the Dead)" and the video follows a concept similar to the meaning found within the song, dealing with the theme of seeking vengeance after death. "We play these four villains who are evil to the core," explains guitarist **Scott Mellinger**. "We end up striking down a newlywed couple who come back from the dead to seek revenge." The video was directed by Derek Dale (As I Lay Dying, Demon Hunter) who worked under strict time constraints, filming the bulk of the video in just under seven hours before the band sped off just in time to play a scheduled show.



GLENN KAISER

WRITES, PLAYS, AND TEACHES THE BLUES

Grrr Records is releasing Glenn Kaiser's *School of Blues Volume 1 Instructional DVD*. Volume 1 of this two-part series focuses on Glenn's approach to acoustic guitar, dobro, singing and songwriting. Bonus materials include two music videos, an interview with Glenn, biography and complete discography. Volume 2 of the series will focus on electric guitar and harmonica, and is due for release in 2007. The label is also releasing *Blues Heaven II*, which features more of the best of Glenn Kaiser's blues for the serious blues aficionado. With songs from Resurrection Band, Glenn Kaiser Band, Glenn's solo projects, and one previously unreleased live song, this album continues the passionate, authentic-sounding blues music that seems to bleed from the Kaiz.



Switchfoot sticks its neck out (again).

Switchfoot has almost quietly wrapped up its sixth album, *Oh! Gravity*, which releases on December 26. With subtle help from producer Tim Palmer (Pearl Jam, U2) Switchfoot has expanded its musical scope, which can be heard on the sawing alt-country of "Head Over Heels," the exotic instrumentation and Middle Eastern flavor of "Circles," the REM-esque pulse of "4:12," the lush Brit-pop melodies of "Yesterdays," the Echo and the Bunnymen/Smiths influenced "Burn Out Bright" and Motown sound of "Amateur Lovers." Foreman explains this result: "We were listening to a lot of Motown Records at the time. I guess whenever white guys try to play soul music; it comes out sounding like the Stones."

News bullets

Norma Jean have been enjoying lots of sold-out shows on its *Radio Rebellion Tour* with Between the Buried and Me, Fear Before the March of Flames, Misery Signals, The Fully Down, and Bless the Fall. "The shows have been amazing, way beyond our expectations," describes **Cory Brandon**. "All the bands have tons of energy and it is definitely bleeding into the crowd. It seems like everyone is having fun and we can't ask for more than that... it's why we do what we do. Seeing the whole tour production come together is really satisfying as well. This is definitely blown way out, over the top. We are doing more on stage than ever. We figure if people are going to pay to see us play our songs on stage, then we might as well make it fun for them."

Krystal Meyers' song, "Together," is scheduled to be used by NBC to promote its new, hit drama *Heroes*.

Hawk Nelson is releasing two Christmas songs, "Alleluia" and "I Heard The Bells."

As I Lay Dying has been holed up, writing songs for its next full-length. "So far the writing process has been very enjoyable," explains **Tim Lambesis**. The band will take a month-long break in November to tour with Bullet for My Valentine and Protest the Hero in Europe.

Underoath's video, "In Regards To Myself," was added to MTV2 and Fuse. Directed by the avant-garde production team Popcore Films (Cult of Luna) and shot on location in Sweden, the video for the song "compellingly portrays themes of isolation and redemption through its stark surrealistic setting." Early reports from the *Taste of Chaos International* shows state that the song is one of the highlights of the band's set. Thursday's lead singer, Geoff, joined 'em on stage at Burswood Dome in Perth, Australia to sing "A Moment Suspended In Time" in front of 6,500 rabid fans. The band plans on headlining in the US early this year.



Jonezetta

BY ARIEL PEASE

One of the hottest new acts from Seattle's Tooth & Nail Records, Jonezetta is a long way from Clinton, Mississippi. Far from southern rock stereotypes, Jonezetta's killer vocal hooks, catchy lyrics and dance-inducing synthesized rock beats in a modern-meets-retro style, prove to be refreshing and have amassed them quite a following in their short, yet hard-earned career.

Since recording their debut album, *Popularity*, throughout January and February 2006, vocalist Robert Chisolm and band mates Kyle Howe, Ty Garvey, and Mick Parsons have been touring nonstop. After tours with several Tooth & Nail label mates, and then dates with As Cities Burn, Jonezetta immediately embarked on a two month tour with Mute Math and Shiny Toy Guns. "It is a very difficult time, but you just keep going," says Chisolm, with the slightest hint of a southern drawl, on the stress of touring back to back.

Jonezetta's growing popularity is, no doubt, a result of *Popularity*'s release on October 3. "You can tell as our record has been out, there's more participation with our band and fun [at live shows]." This tour, especially, has

brought out not only the typical teen crowd, but an energetic, fun older crowd as well. Perfect for a self proclaimed "pop band that likes good pop melodies...a fun time live," that is all about, "crowd participation."

Though their influences stem from past progressive rockers like Genesis and the Cure, and some "nineties one hit wonders," it is hard not to notice the similarities among Jonezetta and bands like the Killers, Panic! At the Disco, and Franz Ferdinand, but don't lump them too closely. While admitting those bands helped pave the way for "more creative pop songs to hit the air," Chisolm defends, "We are way more rock and roll than the Killers." One of the biggest differences is the lack of keyboards in their live shows, utilizing all guitars for a more rock and roll feel.

Chisolm is currently writing new material, and is confident "the audience we have gained will be willing to share something different with us for our second record." A fan of Third Eye Blind, Chisolm would like Stephan Jenkins to produce a Jonezetta album. "He is a very underrated musician...his melodies are brilliant and are some of the catchiest things I have ever heard." Whether Jenkins produces or not, look for "lengthier choruses, not so much pop songs...a bigger Jonezetta than we are now."

Seventh Day Slumber just shot a video for their song, "Awake," which was directed by Dan Dolbi.

The new **MxPx** single supporting the *Let It Happen* re-release is called "Role Remodeling." Kudos to the band & T&N for mending fences to an old dispute that was garnered in part by the original release of this best-selling album.

Monday Morning has been recording songs for a new album, which they hope to release mid-year.

Relient K recorded a short acoustic performance for the *AP Show* on XM Radio's *Fungus 53* channel, as well as a short interview with editor Scott Heisel. They played a new song, as well as a Weezer cover – "Surf Wax America." The band's new album title looks to be *Five Score And Seven Years Ago*. Look for it in March.

T Bone Burnett shows up with "Baby Don't You Say You Love Me" for WFUV's *Folk Live 9* compilation CD.

A Scenic Remembrance, who are releasing their EP, *We Are The Storm*, have signed on to Scotoma Promotions, who describe the band's music as "an infectious brand of post-hardcore that perfectly catches emotion and sincerity. Think Silverstein, early Thursday, Beloved, Roses Are Red, Emery, and Hawthorne Heights." The band heads out on tour in December.

Pivitplex is finally having its sophomore album, *The King in a Rookery*, released in stores. Vocalist **Scott Brownson** says the band took a very different approach when it came time to record the new album. "Constant touring and three years of trials and joys fueled the content of the new songs. Being away from family, the sudden death of my brother-in-law, my daughter's recovery from a coma... I have had some joyous highs and sad lows."

Leigh Nash has released a holiday EP, *Wishing For This*.

HARDNEWS

Page fourteen



Don't Die Cindy

BY DAN MACINTOSH

"Cindy was the sister of one of the ladies that died in the building (one of New York's Twin Towers)," answers vocalist Patrick Hosey when explaining the story behind his unusually named band, Don't Die Cindy. Hosey learned about this troubled woman, who felt responsible for her sister's death, from an HBO documentary about 9/11. Her tale, which initially inspired a song, evolved into a group name. "When I found musicians to form a band, I just dropped the song and kept the name," says Hosey.

Hosey, who is in his twenties now, has been playing music for a long time – especially for such a relatively young man.

"I've been playing music since I was twelve, but shows since I was thirteen," Hosey explains. "I saw a couple of people playing guitar outside of the gym at school one day, and I was, like, 'You guys are so cool!' Back then it was just for popularity and for girls. And it just evolved into my lifelong dream and goal. It became where I got all of my gratification in life from."

There is a strong spiritual vein running through Don't Die Cindy's music. It makes one wonder if Hosey considers himself a Christian.

"I used to," Hosey answers honestly. "Right now, I don't really know what I would call myself. I used to be deeply spiritual and fairly religious. I'm even sporting some Christian tattoos on my body still. I'm just trying to figure things out and the records reflect that. I'm just searching for the truth."

Don't Die Cindy has been compared to other arty acts like Radiohead, although you may not hear their more cerebral musical personality on the new *Most Imperfect Skies* release.

"Somehow by making the record, a lot of our spacey-ness and artistic side somehow got toned down a little bit," Hosey says. "But if you were able to see us live, you'd be able to see where that came from."

Winning an Ernie Ball battle of the bands enabled Don't Die Cindy to participate in the Warped tour. Yet its seemingly endless blue skies still have a few imperfections in them, as the new CD's title suggests.

"We were supposed to be playing Greenville, South Carolina tonight," Hosey explains. "We get to the place that we're playing, and the door says, 'Closed for remodeling.'"

Just like everyone else, Don't Die Cindy is flying the imperfect skies.

News bullets

Flyleaf is featured on *The Family Values Tour 2006 CD & DVD*, along with Korn, Deftones, and other bands on the bill. Next they are going out on the *Music As A Weapon Tour*, along with Disturbed, Stone Sour, and Nonpoint.

Klank is alive and well and active on myspace. Surf to myspace.com/klankny and klanknation.com. "I've been posting / rotating unreleased stuff here and there on the band page. You're only allowed 4 songs max, so I alternate here and there."

The US label has decided to release **Virgin Black's** *Requiem* in three stages (instead of all at once), beginning in the new year: *Requiem – Mezzo Forte* (the second in the series) will come out first; followed by *Requiem – Fortissimo* (the third and heaviest); and the first last, *Requiem – Pianissimo*. The band plans to tour these monster releases!

Needtobreathe has their latest single, "Shine On," smack dab in the middle of a triumphant moment for Dane Cook's character in the film *Employee of the Month*, co-starring Jessica Simpson.

He Is Legend is out on the road with Silverstein and Aiden.

Project 86 is busy working on another album. **Andrew Schwab** describes the material as having: "More energy, more experimentation with keyboards" (what?) and "lyrically, metaphorical, yet confrontational and bold." In the meantime the band will have two remixed tracks at purevolume and myspace.

The Classic Crime's *Albatross*, with 3,700 copies sold in its first week, is bestowed with the honor of being T&N's best-selling debut ever. The Classic Crime and **I Am Ghost** are both currently out with *A Static Lullaby* and *So They Say*.

HM's writer/reviewer **Nate Allen** has released and toured his own *Awake O' Sleeper* album on Quiver Society.

Robert Randolph & The Family Band were tapped for Farm Aid 2006.



Last Ditch Remedy

BY TIMOTHY GERST

Last Ditch Remedy, hailing from Puyallup, Washington, is bringing quality, good sounding melodious rock music to the industry. Formed nearly 4 years ago, while still in high school, the band has been through several daunting challenges, but through it all, has finally been signed to a record label (Cake Records), and released their debut album, *The Following*, on August 22.

"Our hope is to share with the bands how we feel about situations that all people go through," lead vocalist Paul Baldwin recently commented when asked what he thought the purpose of the band was. The music is positive and sheds light on several topics that people face everyday in life, and that was the hope of the band – to connect with the fans.

Music is not all that this band worries about – "We want all fans to know that we are there for them. We want to get to know them and talk to them," Baldwin comments. Truly this band's desire is not fame or wealth or a "perfect" rock star life, but rather a relationship with as many people as possible, spreading their knowledge to their fans in the form

of sometimes soft and sometimes slight bit harder melodious rock music.

Last Ditch Remedy's music is unique, but comparable to that of Taking Back Sunday and All American Rejects, although the band says their influences are Mae, Anberlin, the Deftones, and Armor For Sleep. As you listen to their album, you will hear intrinsic songs about love, hate, and revival – songs that aren't just songs, but songs that make your mind move and leave that thought in your head for days after you hear the song.

The band members are still young and hope that their efforts will affect other kids their own age or young adults ... If you want to be technical, to pursue a different style of life. Not a life of drugs, sex, and alcohol, but a life of morals, dignity, and honesty.

This band has got it going on – a new record with a great message, several shows booked and more to come, and a growing fan base. If you have yet to hear this band be sure to visit their website at lastditchremedy.com and keep an eye out on their tour page – they might be coming to a city near you.

News bullets

Tooth & Nail is releasing an exclusive digital version to iTunes of **The Fold's** *This Too Shall Pass* album, complete with 4 bonus tracks not on the original album. Remember **Still Breathing?** Who could forget the brash, powerful vocals of **Dacey Rame?** She and husband **Michael Rame** have formed **Hollywood Burning**. They've also recruited former bassist from The Agony Scene, **Garrett Grover**. They finished up a new EP in August, *Blackend Eyes & Lullabys*.

Immortal Records is releasing a cool benefit album called *A Santa Cause II*, which will raise money to help the non-profit CureAutismNow organization. It'll be a digital only compilation (available at myspace.com/asantacause). Artists featured include: It Dies Today, Scary Kids Scaring Kids, **Haste the Day**, Spitalfield, **Daphne Loves Derby**, and **Brandston**, among many. Haste The Day comments: "Cure Autism Now is an important organization and we can only hope that our contribution will help the cause. Myspace and Immortal rule for taking an active interest in this!!" "We've always wanted to do a Christmas song of our own," adds **Matthew Traxler** of Brandston, "and never had the push to do it. This was a really great opportunity to get to be a part of raising awareness and funds for something important, as well as doing something fun on our end of it. The song we contributed ("Christmas in Ohio") was born out of a cold morning sentimental look back on holidays gone by and the sort of mid-western snowy, day after depression."

A partial track-listing *A Santa Cause II* includes:

Far-Less – "I'll Be Home for Christmas"
Flee The Seen – "Blue Christmas"
Haste the Day – "O' Come Emanuel"
Tyler Read – "January"

Bom In The Flood is a new band that are all friends with the guys in **The Fray**. People are paying attention and our guess is that they'll be signed soon. Imagine The Call playing atmospheric mood music and you might get the right idea...

HARDNEWS

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Enough Already!



BY JAMIE LEERAKE

How different an experience with Scripture is THE BIBLE EXPERIENCE: NEW TESTAMENT (Inspired By...Zondervan)? How about a who's-who of African-American celebrity vocal talent? With a mostly unobtrusive original soundtrack peppered with songs, this is about as lavish as audio Scripture gets. Yeah, the TNIV isn't always the most poetic. And the bulk of famed clergy here look to be word of faith adherents. Nonetheless, this impressive undertaking makes a worthwhile aural companion for saints of any ethnicity. (InspiredBy.com/BibleExperience.htm)

Am loving that outspoken 13 year-old believer – MILEY CYRUS stars in a 'twencentric Disney Channel Monkees update, *Hanna Montana*. If only I enjoyed the show's soundtrack album (Walt Disney) for more than its Radio Disney-ready take on neo-new wave musicality. Oh, plus Miley duet-ting with real-life/on-screen dad Billy Ray Cyrus and a rockin' 'nuff contribution by former Christian market sister trio Everlife. I'm long out of Cyrus' prime demographic, but still...

The Catholic New York City teens in THE HOLY GHOST RECEPTION COMMITTEE #9 were swinging long before yours truly could utter "psychedelic." The studio act's two late '60s albums compiled on *The Collected Works* (Hallucinations) showcase their Kinks, Beatles, Youngbloods and Jefferson Airplane influences dandily. Alternating trippiness and folkiness accompany often startling lyrics, hardly Vatican-specific for maximum relatability. Sounds to be mastered from vinyl, but it's this or \$100+ each LP on eBay, gang. (ForcedExposure.com)

Had the Xian music press room for the

discursive kind of music criticism allowed in NYC's *Village Voice* newspaper, "our" scene may have produced more writers of FRANK KOGAN's insight. *Real Punks Don't Wear Black* (University Of Georgia Press) collects musings by my former penpal for VV, his own fanzines and others. Little about tuneage found in Bible bookshops, but with his craft, reasonableness, too much profanity for some and lack of guile, Kogan opens eyes and ears. (UGAPress.UGA.edu)

Finally bought the late '90s CD reissue of ANTHOLOGY OF AMERICAN FOLK MUSIC (Smithsonian Folkways), weird genius Harry Smith's 6-LP collection from 1952 that paved the way for labels with a mind to mine the riches of rural parochial music of the 78 RPM era. CD #4 is where to find the sermonettes and sacred songs, but the whole kaboodle's a revelation of mystifying goodness. So profound is its influence 54 years on, it has its own URL: folkways.si.edu/learn_discover/anthology/anthology.html.

Lastly, shouldn't LEE WILLIAMS & THE SPIRITUAL QC'S be the next old-time soul gospel vocal group to follow The Blind Boys of Alabama as honorary rock stars? They don't pal around with Ben Harper nor Peter Gabriel, but Williams' stand-dead-still stage persona and measured vocals exude godly assurance and righteousness. Their latest, *Soulful Healing* (MCG), is as good a place as any to get acquainted with Williams' retelling Bible stories and singing up a deceptively serene storm. (MCGRecords.com).

Send music. Lots of it. Stuff that will freak out Editor/Publisher Doug. Send it to P.O. Box 29, Waupun, WI 53963-0029. And soon. Thanks awfully.

News bullets

The Crossing have released a new Celtic Christmas album, *The Court of a King*. (don't the words "new" and "Celtic" together sound like an oxymoron?)

Inhale Exhale is going out with **Maylene** all the month of December, with **Twelve Gauge Valentine** opening the show.

Under Pressure Magazine has released a hardcore compilation highlighting Canadian bands, including **Comeback Kid** (with "Partners In Crime") and **Far From Ruin**.

The new **Michael W. Smith** album, *Stand*, features several songwriting contributions from **Leeland Mooring**, who co-wrote with the prolific cCm singer.

Steelroots, who have their own extreme sports (surf, skating, and music) tv network, have put together a dvd of 10 skateboarders telling their story of faith (*Kaleidoscope*). As companion pieces, they've apparently re-launched their record label with an amazingly eclectic soundtrack, as well as a 31-day devotional. The soundtrack features the great obscure **Larry Norman** song, "I Feel Like Dying," as well as **Johnny Cash's** "The Man Comes Around" and **Mute Math's** "Plan B," **16HP's** "Deadrun," **Anberlin's** "Ready Fuel" and the Norman Greenbaum classic "Spirit In The Sky."

And speaking of Mute Math... They will be opening for The Fray on an arena tour in January.

Two high school girls, Rachel and Rebekah Winters, have collected honest and personal devotions from a bunch of artists (from rockers like **Skillet**, Hawk Nelson, **Kutless**, **Pillar**, and Krystal Meyers to cCm bands like **Sanctus Real** and **Casting Crowns**) for a thick book called *Behind The Music*.

Former members of **System Failure** started **Share the Suffering**, "because we wanted to be in a band with Christ as the the focus and we thought our town (Omaha, NE) was lacking a band that was bringing the noise for Christ." The band is "in the heavy vein, but experimenting with styles..."



Radial Angel

BY MATT CONNER

For some, patience is a virtue. For the members of Radial Angel, it's also a have-to.

Since forming in 1999, the quartet from Oklahoma City has been creating memorable pop/rock hooks that have not gone unnoticed. The band soon signed a deal with the now-defunct Squint division of Warner Bros (home of Chevelle, Sixpence None The Richer) and rightfully expected things to take off. Alas, this was not to be.

"It was a mixed blessing," notes bassist Eddie Jones. "Things weren't happening the way that we wanted them to, but it was also crushing because we'd gotten to a point where we had help and you felt like it could go someplace. Then it all came tumbling down with Squint. It was tough at that moment and you go through a phase where you're bitter and upset. Then you come through that and realize it was a plan and it needed to happen."

The plan included recording the independent EP *Summer Fade* and touring relentlessly in the process. Selling scores of albums on their own, the autonomous life has been both up and down for Radial Angel. "It's been a good experience for us, but it can be tough at times," says Jones. "Since we had a good base started, we've had a lot of connections with promoters around the country who've helped us stay busy. It's just tough because you have to deal with the business and music side all at once."

Now with their latest effort, *Waiting on Love*, the band members find themselves doing just that. "I think it's very representative of where we are," explains Jones. "We feel that love represents God. And with where we are as a band and having to find a label, we feel we are waiting on Him to guide us and give us direction. So we felt *Waiting on Love* was a good title for that."

Musically, *Waiting* finds the band moving away from *Summer Fade* and crafting a more radio-friendly quality. But the music is still primarily the backdrop for the raw approach they're known for.

"We come at it from an emotionally, honest perspective," says Jones. "I know a lot of bands like Switchfoot try to stay to a more positive sort of outlook. We want to deal with humanity as it is, whether positive or negative, and tell it from our perspective."

Kevin Max has been performing rocked-out solo dates. "There's something primal about rock that pop doesn't provide," Kmax explains. They often end their sets with a cover of Muse's "Sing For Absolution."

Decyfer Down shot a video for their song, "Fight Like This" in NYC with director Dale Resteghini (Hawthorne Heights, Mudvayne, Fall Out Boy). The band is on a late fall tour with Pillar, The Showdown, and Day of Fire that goes into mid-December.

Phil Keaggy is releasing *Dream Again* on Strobe Records on January 30. This is his first vocal project since 2000's *Inseparable*. Keaggy wanted to give this album a "homespun feel," so it's predominantly acoustic. "It's a relationship album," Keaggy explains, "about our relationship with God and with those who are near in our lives." One song ("Micah 6:8") features vocals from his daughter, Alicia; as well as vocals and guitar from son Ian on the songs "Why" and "Revive Me." He also has a cool new instrumental album coming out (Roundabout) that highlights his brilliant looping technique.

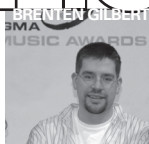
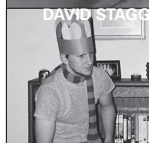
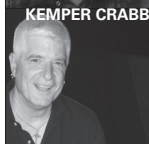
This Moment shot a video for their track "Beatific Vision" in Culver City, CA yesterday with director Darren Doane (As I Lay Dying, Poison The Well). The song comes from the band's upcoming album *Star Parallel*, which is currently set for a February 20th release through Uprising Records. The band will be hitting the road this winter with Cold War and Contra for a west coast tour.

The people behind this fall's new show, "Friday Night Lights," have asked **Radial Angel** for permission to use their tour posters on the set as background.

Football fans may have seen **U2** and Green Day join forces for a short set heralding the return of the New Orleans Saints team to their Superdome field on September 25.

Tobymac's *Winter Wonder Slam Tour* will also feature Hawk Nelson, **The Afters**, and **Family Force 5**.

STAFF PICKS 2006

	1 Woven Hand 2 The Alarm 3 Headnoise 4 Underoath 5 Renascent Annie Quick Black Rebel M. Club	Favorite Albums <i>Mosaic</i> <i>Under Attack</i> <i>For Now We Know In Part 1</i> <i>Define The Great Line</i> <i>Through Darkness</i> Favorite Indie/Unsigned Band Favorite Live Show		1 Mars III 2 Mute Math 3 Fair 4 Jars Of Clay 5 The Elms Hello Kelly Family Force 5	Favorite Albums <i>Pro Pain</i> <i>S/T</i> <i>The Best Worst Case Scenario</i> <i>Good Monsters</i> <i>The Chess Hotel</i> Favorite Indie/Unsigned Band Favorite Live Show
	1 Underoath 2 August Burns Red 3 Spitfire 4 A Love Ends Suicide 5 He Is Legend Oh God, It's Back! S.O.T.U. 2006 Tour	<i>Define The Great Line</i> <i>Thrill Seeker</i> <i>Self-Help</i> <i>In The Disaster</i> <i>Suck Out The Poison</i>		1 Mute Math 2 Jars Of Clay 3 The Elms 4 Fair 5 Bernard Sleeping At Last Mute Math	<i>S/T</i> <i>Good Monsters</i> <i>The Chess Hotel</i> <i>The Best Worst Case Scenario</i> <i>A View Beyond The Curve</i>
	1 Showbread 2 Derek Webb 3 P.O.D. 4 Project 86 5 Thrice Sleeping At Last Mute Math	<i>Age Of Reptiles</i> <i>Mockingbird</i> <i>Testify</i> <i>...And The Rest Will Follow</i> <i>Vheissu</i>		1 Serena-Maneesh 2 Mute Math 3 Robert Randolph... 4 Danielson 5 Leeland Tara Lea Cobble The Phlegmatics	<i>S/T</i> <i>S/T</i> <i>Colorblind</i> <i>Ships</i> <i>Sound Of Melodies</i>
	1 Foxhole 2 Anathallo 3 The Album Leaf 4 Sleeping At Last 5 Pigeon John Novelift Sufjan Stevens	<i>Push/Pull</i> <i>Floating World</i> <i>Into The Blue Again</i> <i>Keep No Score</i> <i>And The Summertime Pool Party</i>		1 Derek Webb 2 Jars Of Clay 3 Dead Poetic 4 Skillet 5 Maylene and the... The Listening Black Rebel M. Club	<i>Mockingbird</i> <i>Good Monsters</i> <i>Vices</i> <i>Comatose</i> <i>S/T</i>
	1 Danielson 2 Parson Redheads 3 John Mallinen 4 Psalters 5 The Remnants The Psalters The Psalters	<i>Ships</i> <i>Field Mouse Carnival EP</i> <i>S/T</i> <i>The Divine Liturgy of the Wretched...</i> <i>Bang Bang</i>		1 The Applesseed Cast 2 mewithoutYou 3 Spitfire 4 Maylene and the... 5 Norma Jean Blessed by a Broken... The Applesseed Cast	<i>Peregrine</i> <i>Brother, Sister</i> <i>Self-Help</i> <i>S/T</i> <i>Redeemer</i>
	1 Matisyahu 2 Showbread 3 — 4 — 5 Urban Rescue Mute Math	<i>Youth</i> <i>Age Of Reptiles</i>		1 David Bazan 2 Starflyer 59 3 Sufjan Stevens 4 Danielson 5 The Applesseed Cast Zookeeper David Bazan	<i>Fewer Moving Parts EP</i> <i>My Island</i> <i>The Avalanche</i> <i>Ships</i> <i>Peregrine</i>
	1 Danielson 2 V/A 3 Jars Of Clay 4 Candi Staton 5 Jonathan Rundman E-Cross Mavis Staples	<i>Ships</i> <i>Good God! A Gospel Funk Hymnal</i> <i>Good Monsters</i> <i>His Hands</i> <i>Protestant Rock Ethic</i>		1 Starflyer 59 2 David Crowder Band 3 Red 4 Jai Agnish 5 mewithoutYou — Ever Stays Red	<i>My Island</i> <i>A Collision</i> <i>End Of Silence</i> <i>Mechanical Sunshine</i> <i>Brother, Sister</i>

LIVE REPORT

Austin City Limits Festival
September 15-17

BY DOUG & CHARLOTTA VAN PELT

AUSTIN, TX – This seems to be the “Age of the Festival,” as many organizations have ironed out the organizational kinks of multi-act two and three-day festivals. The folks that put on Austin City Limits have their stuff together, making minor tweaks here and there to keep it one of the premiere festivals in the world. This, their fifth annual fest, went off without a hitch. A wallet was lost on the first day and recovered on the second ... and \$300 cash was still inside upon its return. How cool is that?

Del Castillo played in the Washington Mutual tent/building, putting out an incredible amount of passionate jamming. Their two flamenco guitarists are about as fast and blazing (in harmony, too) as I’ve heard. Their singer is quite the frontman (imagine a Latino Tom Jones). **Van Morrison** closed out the night with his wise old songs of truth. While the humidity and heat combine to make this an endurance test, by the end of the night (at only 10 pm) we were spent.

A Gospel band called **The New Soul Invaders** brought that kind of energy bright and early in the morning in their 11:30 am time slot. The Washington Mutual stage showcased a lot of good Gospel music throughout all three days of the festival.

The Rocket Summer showcased young (adult) prodigy Bryce Avary, who came out bursting with unbridled energy, with his between-song encouragement as upbeat or more so than even his songs. “Tell Me Something Good” came off a tad faster than the album, which translated well live. “Never Knew” could’ve easily been the last song of the set, as it peaked at just the right time.

Anathallo played one of the early sets on Sunday, which began to the accompaniment of a late September rain. It started soft and steadily increased, until it was flying almost sideways and soaking the band members pretty good. The stagehands madly started dashing around, covering all the wedges, pianos, and guitar amps with plastic. Whenever vocalist Matthew Joynt would prompt the audience to clap, large splashes of water would radiate from his palms. I have no idea how his electric guitar kept working – much less his microphone! The various percussion instruments, of course, offered splashes of water in addition to thunderous sonic booms. It was great to see the giant video screens near most of the stages splash up the visuals of the band jamming out. They plowed through their set, though, which was



no small feat, and they were very appreciative of the audience that hung in there with them.

Matisyahu brought his Reggae-splashed hip-hop to the large AT&T stage late Sunday afternoon, which was likened to “bringing church” to the crowd. When this Hassidic Jew freestyles praise and worship with a free-flowing musical bed that’s breaking down and “capturing” an emotional peak, it was a joyous time of being led into worship of our Creator God by this happy musician. “We can make a place for the king in this world... His Name is Elohim. He created everything. I see Him right over there...” (and he described various audience members as he pointed them out). This was so cool and ranks right up there with similar “church” experiences in unexpected places, like shows by U2, King’s X, The Alarm. Good, rich stuff that brings more than an average show.

Overall, the eclectic fest brought a condensed taste of Austin to several thousand.





Metal tracks



• Big and historic news to report: Classic CD Books has licensed and released an audio book version of the **Stryper** biography, *Loud N' Clear*. 6 CD's (or an mp3 version) make these exciting stories of the band's beginnings and history incredibly dramatic. One after another story unfolds that underscores the hand of God in the modern day revival that hit the Hollywood metal scene.

• **John Mahan** and **Josh Kramer (Saint)** are working on a project together. This should be an interesting development. More info later.

• Admit it, one of our favorite things in the 80s was speculating about what band could possibly be "turning Christian" with their lyrics. One of the 80s most beloved melodic metal bands, Europe, is now seeming to be in the midst of such a transformation. Perhaps singer Joey Tempest is thinking about spiritual things more than ever. Some of the songs on *Secret Society* sure lean towards Christianity, like the epic "Devil Sings The Blues" and "Wish I Could Believe."

• **Larry Farkas** of **Once Dead** sent me some rough demo's of songs they've been writing. The good news is we're talking classic

Vengeance sounds – lots of speedy, thrashing metal. I'm so looking forward to hearing this stuff with vocals and officially released.

• Besides listening to **Jim Chaffin's** work with Once Dead, a drummer can learn to refine and improve his/her chops by watching Flo Mounier's *Extreme Metal Drumming 101* instructional DVD.

• Two other DVDs definitely worth checking out are some live recordings by Christian metal's pioneers **Stryper** (*Greatest Hits Live in Puerto Rico*), with a good performance captured well visually in front of a huge crowd and in stereo; and the great prog rockers **Glass Hammer** (*Live At Belmont*), mixed in a gorgeous 5.1 surround sound and filmed with multiple cameras.

• Escapi Music has done us all a great favor by re-issuing the first two **Trouble** albums - *Psalm 9* and *The Skull*, which helped revitalize doom metal (a la Sabbath at 16 RPM) and become one of the first bands called "White Metal," who were also controversial (with the "are they or are they not?" debate). Both re-releases include a bonus DVD with extremely raw live footage from the band's early days.

Album reviews

BRIDE – *Skin For Skin*

Someone's made Bride mad, and they never sounded nastier, and (possibly) never heavier. Not since *Snakes...* (yep) has Troy Thompson's riffs sounded like they could stop your heart from beating or beat it back into life again (though "Murder" on *Scarecrow...* was pretty cool, too). "Inside Ourselves" has more soloing than I remember ever hearing from Troy. The drum sounds are monstrous. There's parts ("The Government") that sound trippy like System of a Down or Audioslave, and others, like "End Of Days," that are downright scary a la Marilyn Manson. I like it! Bride has returned back to what they do best – flat out rock. "Fuel and Fire" reminds me of what Disciple used to sound like. This could be the comeback fans have been waiting for. *[Retroactive]*

EVERGRACE – *S/T*

These six short-haired Swedes make some solid power metal (melodic) noise that would make their forefathers proud. Sonic cleanliness and superb technicality abounds here, as does the power chord. *[Ulterior]*

DIVINEFIRE – *Into A New Dimension*

Christian Rivel's sideband, Divinefire, is keeping up with Narnia's output these days, releasing similar power metal with lots of great double bass drumming, progressive keyboard playing and guitar shredding (all fabulously played by Jani Stefanovic). Recalling days of Christian metal's beginning's, the lyrics focus squarely on the eternal battle between good and evil, and the saving power of Jesus. *[Ulterior]*

Classic Moments in Christian Rock history

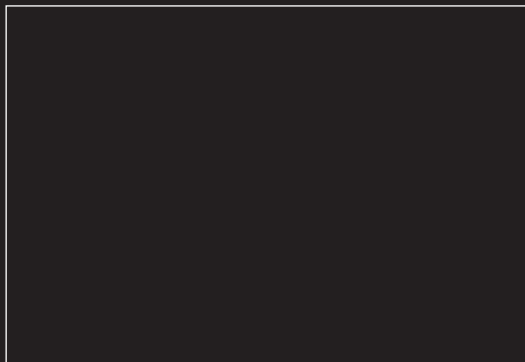
HISTORY 21

BY DOUG VAN PELT



[Jan-Feb 2003]. For a short duration Norma Jean performed several sans vocalist shows. "We were on tour with Beloved and mewithoutYou," explains drummer Daniel Davison, "and our singer, Brad Norris, got sick." He flew home to get better and the band was faced with whether or not to return home themselves. They chose to forge ahead. "There's no way we can go home," Davison continues. "We'll just do it, play an instrumental show." They set up mics toward the audience and explained to the crowd what was going on. Members of the crowd pointed out people that knew the lyrics and they gave it a shot. With the help of word of mouth and the internet, word got out and people started coming prepared. "We invited this guy named Matt Tarpey (from Virginia), who knew all the words, to come out for a couple shows. A guy named Justin (from Chicago) also did amazing. He knew the songs better than we did. After a couple of amazing instrumental shows, Brad came back. It was a memorable tour, even though our van broke down numerous times. We even travelled in a U-Haul and drove into snow banks." Roadside mishaps aside, this was a tour that Norma Jean proved that they were indeed road-tested veterans that wouldn't let anything get in their way of bringing the rock.

I HAVE A DREAM... (ORIGINAL ZAO)



BY ERIC REEDER

In the beginning there was passion, raw energy married to desire. Zao was birthed from the heart of God through 4 young guys wanting to express love and the answer to living fully alive. With creativity and God's grace, we played not for recognition or fame. We wanted to share with others the solution to life's heartaches and meaninglessness. Concerts were a time to expect the very presence of God to embrace us all and touch hearts in deep ways that no person ever could. We were never perfect, but we loved enough to offer hope and purpose. Zao was to represent Jesus in a culture that was too often pushed away by a thing called church.

Zao started by Mic Cox and myself becoming friends with Roy Goudy in high school in small town Ohio. We started out with another drummer named George. We wrote our first 4 songs and went to Jesse Smith's house to record them. George never showed, and Jesse sat in. I had gotten the name Zao from a Greek/Hebrew Bible one day as Mic and I drove down the road. It embodied the reason for the band. We wanted to be fully alive (Zao means

alive in Greek) and share with others how to do the same. It became inspiring. More and more people connected with what we called Christ Centered Hardcore. We played the impromptu and skate ramp stages at Cornerstone with bands like Unashamed, Focused, Six Feet Deep, Overcome, and Bloodshed in the crowd. We were blown away that they would watch our show. Each time there was something more than music happening. There was a presence, a force compelling hearts to search for more. Can there be more than just music and fans and tours? Could there be a cause large enough to demand our lives? Could there be purpose and reason that grips our heart? Could there be a fight worth enlisting for? And could there be someone to heal the brokenness of hearts to enable them to fight on? Those were the questions we asked and what drove us to write something that would penetrate the heart of listeners.

Now, 10 years removed from the band, I look into the stages and dream of a movement of artist and musicians that will give their lives to display a love and purpose beyond a show or the next CD. I hear in my heart the same compelling voice, asking if there could be young warriors

that emerge to grip the sword for the cause of LIFE. Could there be an underground movement of youth and young adults that would embrace the call of heaven to be the warriors that battle for life and to be fully alive? God has designed us to be the generation that would take His life into music, art, entertainment, government, business. But we have to determine our efforts to be more than just more songs, pictures, movies or money. We have to center our purpose to give our gift to touch souls in an eternal way. There is a place for bands, artists, etc to play and create so that Jesus can be painted in our day. Heaven is asking us to do that. Could there be a movement like never before of radical young warriors that will be hardcore for the cause of life? Could Zao live on beyond the band, CDs, and shows? Could we ask Jesus to do away with apathy and place in us passion to live fully alive? The only place of living fully alive is living fully for the cause God designed you for. Maybe that is integrity in music or creatively expressing love or overturning abortion or praying for change in a nation. There is a reason for you and a cause that you are to champion for God. Can we live fully alive? Can we live zao?

Could there be?

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THE ALMOST



BY DOUG VAN PELT

The solo release from Underoath's Aaron Gillespie has been talked about for awhile now, and sometime this spring we will all hear what the "clean" voice behind Underoath's drumset will sound like when he's in control of all the aspects of a song. We thought we'd get a few words from the man with the coolest haircut in rock right now, so we got him to contact us while touring Europe with his main gig.

Why did you do this side project, Aaron?

Well, the short answer is: I really wanted to have an outlet that was more pop as opposed to heavy, like Underoath. I mean, I love both; but, ya know, it's good to exercise things differently.

How long have you been sitting on these songs? And why wouldn't they work in an Underoath format?

Not very long at all. I wrote these songs recently and I wanted, like I said above, to

make them rock songs, not heavy songs.

How "serious" of a band is The Almost? What are your plans for The Almost (i.e. touring)?

It is serious. I mean, we will definitely do some touring and release the record, but Underoath is priority.

How different was it for you to front/sing for The Almost vs. playing drums in Underoath?

Well ... for now I'm really just trying to get a feeling for singing not behind a drum set right now. It's different, but going well, though.

This is an interview/story for The Almost, and I'd like to keep it faithful to that, but I haven't had a chance to have a voice from Underoath address the readers of HM Magazine (probably the band's oldest fans) and get any comment you'd care to make about your other band's health/future and the *Warped Tour* dates

cancelled in the name of "focusing on our friendship" (inferring that the band was in peril of splitting up)...?

Things are great. We are on tour in Germany right now with *Taste of Chaos*, we have a winter tour planned. This summer we went home to figure some stuff out personally; not because of Fat Mike or any sort of grandiose circumstances. We did it for us and because we felt that is where God had us then. So, yeah, things are perfect.

How do you think your bandmates would feel if The Almost exploded like Dashboard Confessional did for Chris Carrabba?

I mean, let's be honest... Do you really think that will happen? Even if it did, God's in control and He knows how people tick – including all of us, so I'll let Him handle the future. I'm living in the now.

Nigel Skeet

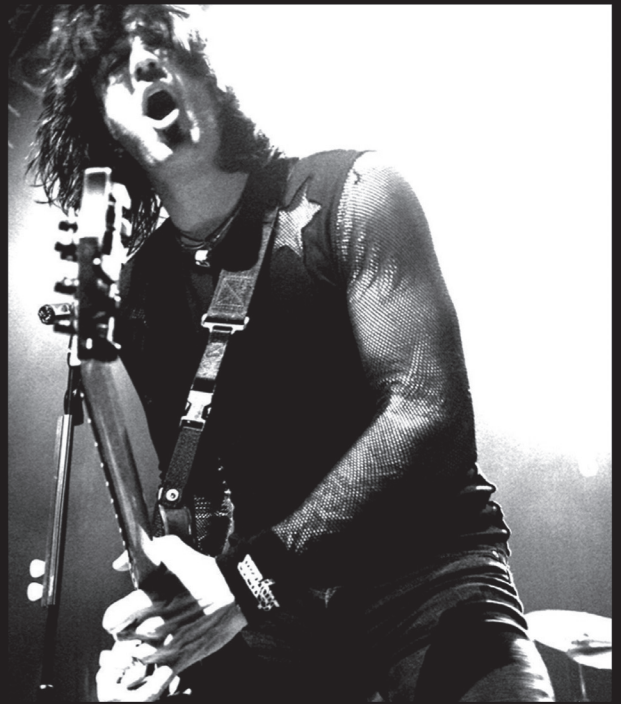
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I AM GHOST



Photo: Valarie Rene

BY DAN MACINTOSH

Vocalist Steven Juliano's voice is thrashed. Maybe it is the constant touring. Or that he rarely does this much talking at 8:30 a.m. Rock & rollers are by nature night owls. And based upon I Am Ghost's pronounced Gothic look and sound, it is hard to imagine these musicians getting all that much sun.

Nevertheless, Juliano soldiers on with the interview, like the shadowy troupier he is. "I originally thought that it would be a cool comic book name because I was into art and drawing comics and stuff," says Juliano, explaining the band's name. He later changed his mind, however. "No, I want to start a band called I Am Ghost. And just see what happens; just more for fun and more for kicks just to see what could happen with a more theatrical band," he told himself. "And it worked."

Spooky song titles, like "Pretty People Never Lie, Vampires Never Really Die," make up the group's new *Lover's Requiem* CD. This ain't your father's Jesus music; so why should Christians pay attention to I Am Ghost? "We're very positive in our lyrics," Juliano affirms. "When you

really get into it and read the lyrics and read about what we're talking about, it's really just this epic story of love. It's all based positively on searching for that true love."

We'll wait and see if the Christian community embraces this dark horse band. Epitaph Records – home to NOFX, Rancid and The Offspring – did not hesitate to sign the band, however. "We were signed to Epitaph after our fourth show ever," Juliano explains. "I've been in other bands before for years that never took off." Brett Gurewitz, founder of Epitaph Records, was instantly impressed with the group's live presentation. "He saw us live, and that was kind of the final, 'Yeah, I've got to sign this band.' He was really stoked on the actual music. But it was the live show – when he came to see us in our hometown – that just blew him away."

In the past, word of mouth spread the news about buzz bands. Now it is the word of MySpace.com. "We owe pretty much everything to them for the start of the band," Juliano admits. "That's how we found all the members. That's how Brett Gurewitz found us. That's how we're promoting a lot of our shows. Getting a lot of fans, nationwide and worldwide, was through MySpace."

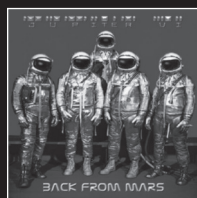
You can buy anything and everything on the internet, from the world's greatest treasures to the most useless junk. MySpace wouldn't have helped I Am Ghost if the band didn't already have something worthwhile to offer. Juliano believes there's something truly special about this group. "Everybody's on the same page," Juliano explains. "In my other bands, there was always, like, one or two guys in the band that you just weren't too sure about. They either didn't seem like they wanted to do it, or they wanted to do a different kind of music, or they wanted to spend more time with their girlfriend or work or this and that."

Without a doubt, Juliano is a 'take charge' guy. "From the very, very beginning I just told them that this is how it's going to be and this is what we're about," he remembers. "I didn't give any false hope or anything like that. I just told them that this is what we're going to do. And everyone agreed. And so that's why I think we're on the same page, which is why it's working."

For I Am Ghost members, this is not just a band: It's their life. "We all quit our jobs and quit school to do this band full time," says Juliano. "So this is, like, all we have right now. We all treat this like our baby."

myspace.com/iameghost

Treat her like a baby



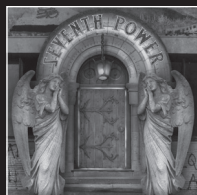
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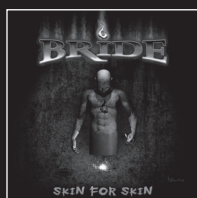
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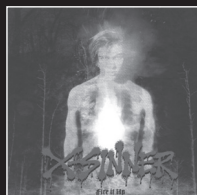
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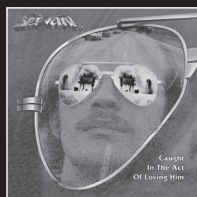
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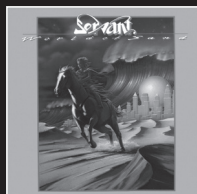
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STARS ARE FALLING



BY JEREMY HUNT

Chock full of hardcore breakdowns, gang vocals, and lots of churning guitar lines, *Stars Are Falling* provide listeners with a gut-rattling heavy music assault on their latest album, *The Consequence of Revenge*, released November 7th on Blood and Ink Records. Bassist Ryan Lester took some time to explain how they've managed to transform from a "crappy indie metal" band into a brutal wall of sound:

Okay, first things first. Who are you guys?

Ryan Lester – bass; Dan Jackson – drums; Rob Pennock – guitars; Robert Bloomfield – vocals.

When/Where did the band form?

We formed in 2002 in the Bay area. We weren't friends before the band; in fact we had never even met before the first time we got together to practice.

How did it come together?

Robert is from Arizona, Dan is from the Bay Area, Ryan is from Sacramento and Rob is from an hour north of Sacramento. I have no idea how it worked; we just started commuting!

Who are some of your influences?

With Honor, Betrayed, Hoods, Casey Jones, Comeback Kid, Terror, First Blood, Go It Alone, anything Rivalry Records. The funny thing is that this is the first album we have written that is actually influenced by the bands we listen to. In the past, we have always written whatever came out of our heads, not worrying about style of whatever, and it all just turned out to be crappy indie metal. This new CD is just written better, because we were able to focus and analyze the parts we were writing.

What inspired this album?

We just started writing music we all liked for once. At first we didn't think it would fly, so we put it under the band name "Challenge" ... then we just decided that we weren't going to be able to continue to be happy playing music we didn't even like. We had lost the key members who made our music "metal," so why keep pushing it, you know? If kids don't like our new stuff just because the style is different, then they can just go be smelly metal kids elsewhere. I'm not saying that everyone will or must love our new CD, but if you can't see that the writing and performances have improved, then you need to go listen to more Ozzy.

What are some of the themes?

The writing is kind of all over the place. Not intentionally, but just because of all the touring we have done. The songs on this album were written over the course of, like, 2.5 years, so things just ended up mirroring life; a bundle mess. My favorite song is "A New Beginning." The song is about taking responsibility for the things you choose. That even choices that may be right for others may not be right for you, and having good enough sense to be able to objectively look at your past and make the changes necessary to be happy.

How was the process of recording?

Difficult as always. We are four opinionated guys, who all have separate visions of how everything should be. We don't fight, or anything like that ... I'm no Axel or anything ... but the continual discussions and explanations of ideas take a lot of time. Plus we had a ton of difficulty with guitar and bass tone. We have a lot of breakdowns, and chug two steps, but we still have our melodic guitar sections, so it was hard to find a middle ground with the tone of each instrument. We are proud of the CD, and kids should like it. Now all we have to do is get it into their hands or on their iPods.

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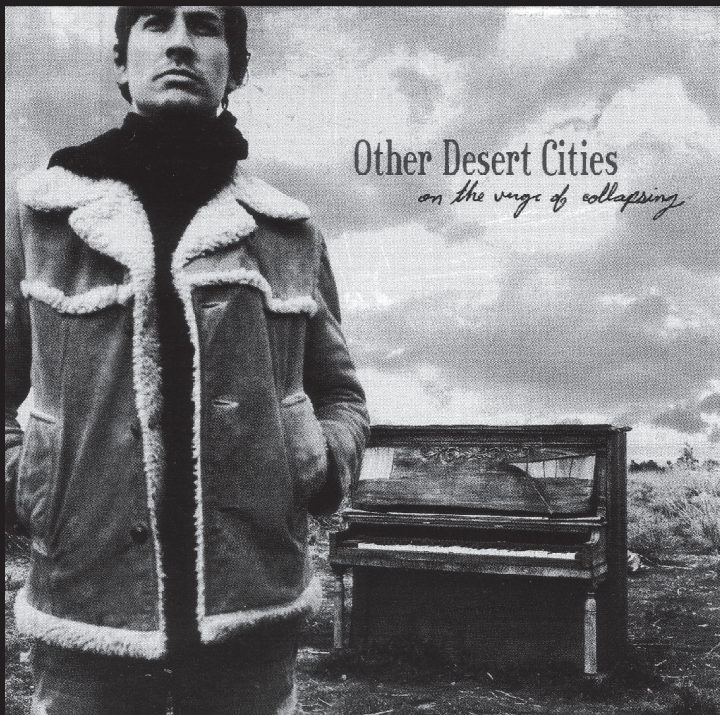


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A LOVE ENDS SUICIDE



BY DAVID STAGG

Talking to Emir Abdo on the phone, I'm starting to wonder if he has any free time what-so-ever. As the bassist for A Love Ends Suicide, he talks really fast, doesn't particularly allow for empty air, and, while on the phone, the background din is constant, like he's walking briskly from some important meeting to another, or – more likely the case – going from fan to fan to introduce them to his band personally. I get the feeling he's very busy.

This theory, as I would come to find out, is very in line with the band's work ethic: get out there; meet people; don't stay put; do every interview you can; take the time to talk with people... It's almost political in nature. In fact, if you've ever been to an A Love Ends Suicide show, you've probably met them. They're hardly stationary, whether onstage or off. They're like electrons beating around the nucleus of the stage, meeting, greeting, talking, trying to get you to listen to their music. It's a die-hard work ethic they've possessed ever since they were 14-years-old and they knew they were serious about doing music for a living.

It's that die hard work ethic that got them on *Warped Tour*. And when they were there, they didn't stop: They'd come right up to you – whether you were

watching some band on stage or not – and offer you the earphones of an iPod. "Ninety percent of the time the people would be kind of skeptical and say, 'I don't really have any money' or 'Nah, it's cool,'" Emir says of his experiences in the trenches. "Then after they listened to it, they bought it. It was that much of a head-turner. We pride ourselves in it."

The band, named after a lyric in the only Edwin McCain song you've probably heard, was shopping *In The Disaster*, a metal-core album to the max; it's a technically sound, shotgun-blast of an album. It's a quasi-follow up to *Circle of Hope*, a record Abdo describes as a pre-production album, a build-up to their official first full-length. "It was more of a project for ourselves to see where we were going with the album." But it was that pre-production-of-an-album that caught the ear of an old friend, who happens to know the right people. Back in the day, guitarist Oscar Cairoli worked at a small recording studio. He made friends with an intern who went on to become As I Lay Dying's road manager and sound guy. "When we came out with (*Circle of Hope*), he picked it up and said, 'Hey do you guys want to get signed to Metal Blade?'" Abdo says. "We were like, 'Yeah whatever.' Not even a week into *Warped Tour*, Tim Lambesis (singer of As I Lay Dying) calls us himself. We were really fortunate they gave us a shot. We used to look up to them – I mean, we still do – and now we're on the phone with them every day."

The band consists of a pair of brothers – Emir and Andres Abdo, bass and drums respectively; John and Oscar Cairoli, vocals and guitar, respectively; and Matt Garcia, their age-old friend – who have been together since junior high. "(Being brothers) does make it easier to think about cool parts, you know what I mean?" Emir says. "We bump heads a lot, but never about the music or the business or anything. If you're on tour with us, any band will notice that we definitely have that brotherly love." The Southern California-based band is now in Seattle; they played a show in Tacoma the night before. And as much as the band is aware of the necessity of publicity, marketing, and the effectiveness of grassroots movements, they built their empire with a firm foundation: *In The Disaster*. "We don't take publicity and all that stuff for granted; we start from the bottom. We start with the music," Emir says. It's their philosophy, their mantra. "We make sure everything is there before we try to get an ounce of publicity. We're not the type of band you'll find backstage. Even on tours, we go and dance with the bands we're on tour with. You can't take the record deal, and take the tour, and just stay in the van. That would be like going to four years of school, get your degree, and then hate your job."

"We're aiming for letting people enjoy the album," Emir says, "to have fun with it, as much as we enjoy playing it."

mystage.com/aloveendsuicide

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ALL IN



BY MARK FISHER

All in is a phrase commonly tossed around in today's busy world but if you stop for a minute and ponder what it truly means, giving yourself completely to something, it becomes a tremendously powerful statement. For the members of Hand of Hope Record's All In, it is a heavy statement ably backed by some punishing traditional hardcore reminiscent of the golden era of the genre, the mid to late nineties.

Forming in the summer of 2005, All In began simply as 5 guys who loved hardcore and wanted to make music together. "When we first started, we would've been fine just playing Point of Recognition covers," says guitarist Brooks Etheredge, "We love live performance and meeting kids much more than we do recording or sales." Originally recording an EP for Mohawk Trail Records, the band was quickly signed by an eager Hand of Hope Records, home to Jesse Smith's Gods and Society's Finest. "They really are the perfect label for us; they give us an incredible amount of support wherever we need it, since we're not a full time band, we couldn't ask for a better situation."

"I don't really know of anyone out there that mixes old school hardcore with the newer, heavier, tougher version of hardcore like we do," states Etheredge. Inevitably leading to a discussion on the blending of the metal and hardcore genres over the last few years, it becomes very clear that All In consider themselves a hardcore band with no sub-labels either needed or desired. All In still makes the distinction between metal and hardcore noting that metal is a non-influence when it comes to the band's music. "We play with metal/metalcore bands all the time but I don't think we really 'compete' with them," says Etheredge, "I don't listen to metal at all, I don't like it or really even know anything about it. I think the shows go well though and that is all that's important to us. If everybody can come to a show and have fun and respect each other then we've built something positive."

Hardcore bands have always separated themselves from whatever the flavor of the moment happens to be with their strong lyrical stances, sacrificing the possibilities of a run on the Billboard charts for the advancement of philosophical ideals. "On *Nothing to Lose* we really wanted to come right out of the gate and make

it clear what we believe, what we stand for." The band makes it evident with nearly every breath that there is forgiveness, resolution if you will, to the shadows of a regrettable past, maintaining a sense of urgency and victory that is sorely lacking from modern music and cementing the band's belief that "...there is forgiveness if you ask for it and you CAN leave your past behind if you want to."

More often than not being up front and strong handed lyrically is mistaken for preaching though, something that has become out of vogue in any market. While more and more bands separate themselves from the tag, All In simply feels that they never wore it to begin with. Offering some clarity on the subject, Etheredge sets the record straight. "We are not preachers. Our lyrics reflect what we believe, but it's like we're just telling our own story, not trying to change yours." When the dust from the pummeling and riotous sounds of All In settles though, you unquestionably know who they are and where they stand, sans the thumping of bibles and all the screaming. Well okay, they did leave the screaming part in.

PILLAR

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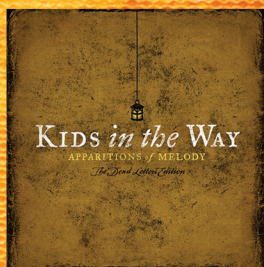
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34 FEATURE

Brothers Martin

DANCEHOUSE REVISITED?

RONNIE AND JASON MARTIN FIRST SET UP THEIR AMPS IN THE EARLY 90S, AT THE BEGINNING STAGES OF BOTH OF THEIR CAREERS. THAT WAS DANCE HOUSE CHILDREN, “PRIMARILY MY PROJECT,” RONNIE SAID. “IT WAS A LITTLE BEFORE JASON WAS GETTING INTO SONGWRITING AND RECORDING. WE WERE BOTH STILL FIGURING THINGS OUT IN THOSE DAYS.” AND THEN, WITH THINGS SOMEWHAT FIGURED, JASON SPLIT OFF TO FORM STARFLYER 59 AND RECORD THE SOLID-ROCKING *SILVER*, WHILE RONNIE CONTINUED TO TWEAK HIS ELECTRONIC FORMULA. HE RELEASED *MELODY* IN 1994 UNDER HIS NEW MONIKER, JOY ELECTRIC.

Which was all perfect for me: when I itched for fightin’, I’d play *Silver* and for lovin’ I’d reach for *Melody*. In my inconsistent college years I kept them both in my CD changer and hit the remote as my love-life dictated. Come morning I never knew how I felt till the shuffler kicked in the first song; if it was Jason’s band, I’d do something drastic. If it was Ronnie’s, I would stay in bed and moon. Joy Electric, that’s moon music.

Despite their role in my life, I was never invited to sup with the Martins, though, and that sort of got to me. I did eat at a diner with Ronnie in 1996 after a pretty fun show in Wisconsin, but I bet he would never remember. Or maybe he would, because he gave me a twenty to cover his meal and I forgot to get change (I’m a big tipper when it comes to other people’s money). And a couple years ago I had a chat with Jason at the Eagles Club, also in Wisconsin; I hit him up for some quarters for the parking meter.

So between all the money I owe them plus all the ways their music has mattered to me, the Martins are a big deal in my life. Not just in mine, either. Fans have been asking for a long time if the bros plan to record together again. The topic came up between Ronnie and chief Tooth and Nail dude Brandon Ebel last year. “Instead of just throwing it off to the side,” Ronnie said, “I decided to talk to Jason and try to make it a reality.”

Good news, fans: January 2007 brings with it their first album together in almost fifteen years. They call themselves The Brothers Martin now, appropriately enough, and the album is self-titled. (Selves-titled? – Eponymous.) *The Brothers Martin* offers some surprises, but with rockers as familiar as these brothers, surprises

aren’t the thing. The question is how they’ll blend their distinctive sounds. For a hint, refer to the MySpace account near you.

... but the two songs there omit a lot of the story. While one participant at the Joy Electric online forum calls “Fears to Remember” the most amazing track he’s heard all year, the album shines the brightest on “Communication,” the one song that the brothers wrote together. The album continues from there into rough outlines of the signature styles that can be expected from Jason and Ronnie augmenting each other. “Blood to the Ears” sounds like Joy E. with Jason’s reverbed-out guitar lines punched in, and contributions from Jason, like “The Missionary” rock like Richard Swift-era SF59.

That jives with what Ronnie outlined as their goal: “We really wanted to loosely blend the two sounds of JE and SF, without it really sounding like one or the other. I mean, inevitably it is going to sound like our songwriting, but some of the more obvious things were left out. I used drum machines and chords, for instance, which is something I never do on JE records.” They recruited Alex Albert, from Project 86, to lay down the live drums.

It gets me thinking. *The Brothers Martin* underscores the best of both worlds, and there’s something new in the meeting. How would Bro-Mart have affected me in my college dorm room? Would I have been better adjusted if I’d had this record back then? Nah – I would still have worn eyeliner, that’s for sure, and anyway I was big into family values even then.

×

BY ADAM ROBINSON

DUSTIN KENS RUE OF THRICE SPEAKS WITH BRIAN QUINCY NEWCOMB ABOUT HIS NEW SOLO ALBUM, *PLEASE COME HOME*.

You didn't have to be "enlightened" to realize that there were some very spiritual themes running just below the surface on the band Thrice's '05 release *Vheissu* (which is pronounced "Vee-sue"). Words like "We are all named and we are all known / we know that we'll never walk alone," from "Image of the Invisible," and "wake, feel your worth, o my soul... awed by grace, I fall on my face / and scream the word that can save us all," from "Stand and Feel Your Worth" exhibit a profoundly Christian perspective, if carefully wrapped in poetic images and metaphor. So, it was only mildly surprising when singer/lyricist and guitar player Dustin Kensrue openly discussed his faith in these pages. Now, with a solo record due out in early '07, Dustin talks about his new work and the ongoing efforts of his band.

"It's just something to do for fun really," says Kensrue about the songs that make up his solo album, *Please Come Home* for Equal Vision Records. "I grew up lugging my acoustic guitar around with me, while my friends would be skateboarding, and just hanging out. I'd have it with me, and be playing and singing. Sometimes I'd play out on the streets for fun, and for change."

Whereas Thrice is an aggressive, post-modern rock unit, left to his own devices here, Kensrue keeps it simple. "I think there's something very cool about bringing a song down to its bare bones," he states. "Some of these songs have been kicking around for a couple years, 'I Knew You Before' is four or five years old. I'd play it around for friends, and I was accumulating other bits and pieces of songs, that would never really work for Thrice."

To say the least, for Kensrue, the solo record offers a chance for a more personal expression, since bands tend to run like democratic committees and require compromise. Still, he warns that too much focus on differences might be artificial; *Please Come Home* does give expression to the artist's profound Christian faith, but it was not intended as a disc for the ccm marketplace. "I just don't think that way," he assured HM, "that's not the way I write songs. It's a little hard to separate it in any meaningful way and make a clear distinction (between the solo songs and Thrice music), because there's such a different vibe musically. I say certain things that I wouldn't say in Thrice songs, because it has a more simple, stripped down feel rather than this weird, 7/8 riff with spacey delays. I

just wouldn't write the words of "I Believe" to sing over that, it wouldn't fit at all. So, I think it's a lot more of a case of matching the lyrics to the feel of the songs. I think there's a different vibe. I wanted this to be a little more folky, in the sense that it's very much about storytelling, and a more proverbial approach to wisdom."

That follows in the title track, "Please Come Home," which is the Prodigal Son parable of Jesus in the Gospels. Says Kensrue, "I think that's an amazing story and I wanted to put a new face on it. I think it's hard for people to relate to older stories, because there's things like, 'he's out feeding the pigs.' You don't get a sense of what that meant to him at that time."

"I Believe" he says, is "a very personal song for me, because I was really in the middle of that struggle for a long time. What I like about the song is that it emphasizes subtly – the need to step back and look at the bigger picture. It says we'll never know everything, and there's this leap of faith, but it also goes through the five senses and concludes that I have other ways to experience the nature of reality, and those things add up to this bigger picture that comes in line with my reasoning. At the end of the day, it comes down to a choice you make."

A darker reflection on life in a broken world is "Blood & Wine," which suggests that sometimes the gifts of God have been twisted and it twists us as well. "There are things that are inherently good that can be used for ill," Kensrue shares, "it can be harming to the soul of a person. Once you've engaged deeply in those things in a negative way, it's hard to be satisfied when you experience those things in a positive way."

But "Consider the Ravens" is a greater reflection on the truest issues in life. It's "a reference to Christ's call to 'consider the ravens, they neither sow nor reap... yet God feeds them,'" says Kensrue. "And there's the Elijah story, where the ravens bring him meat, and there's a stream where he can drink. He's out there in the wilderness where there should be no sustenance, and yet he's provided for. It's about the need for us to have faith that things will be taken care of in one way or another. Being in a band, I live check to check, but it's not month to month, it can be four or five months before I see a check. So, you start to worry about mortgage, wondering if we have enough money for this or that, and that I'm supposed to be giving,

so it's about learning to trust God."

"Weary Saints" is a little harder for Kensrue to explain: "That's an older one. It came together slowly with different lines coming from different situations, so there are a lot of little nuances to it that probably most people wouldn't notice. In each verse the word 'palm' is used in the same spot, but with a different meaning, and there are lots of little things in there like that. Sometimes I get kind of OCD about lyrics, although I'm trying to do it less and less. But sometimes I see an alliteration in this line, and try to mirror it later, and I can get a little freaky about that. So I'm trying to do it less, and this record is definitely looser in that regard."

But the desire to create craftily, to bring artfulness forward in his music, is not something to consider a weakness. "There will be people who get it," admits Kensrue, "who look at it and see that it's really cool. It adds a cohesiveness to a song that doesn't have a chorus, so you get this sense of progression as they line up in a way that feels as if it is repeating even when it's with different words."

But it's a brief album, just 8 songs. "I really like shorter records," explains Kensrue. "On a lot of the older LPs there were four songs to a side. That way it's a lot less overbearing and you can really dig into a record and get a sense of what it really is. And forget where you were an hour ago."

In the meantime, Kensrue is already back at work with his band creating the next Thrice offering, a risk-taking work as well: "It's going to have four discs, with roughly 25 songs total," he says, "which will mean about six songs to a disc, with each disc themed to one of the four elements – earth, wind, fire, and water. Sonically and thematically it will tend to reflect the one of the four elements it represents."

This guy doesn't lack for inspiration, that's for sure.

✕

Dustin Kensrue

"I BELIEVE"



38 FEATURE

Jeremy Enigk

THE SOUNDTRACK OF POPEYE

BY DAN MACINTOSH

JEREMY ENIGK, FORMER SUNNY DAY REAL ESTATE VOICE AND CURRENT THE FIRE THEFT FRONT MAN, IS FINALLY BACK. *WORLD WAITS*, ONLY THE SECOND RELEASE WITH HIS BIRTH NAME (NOT A BAND MONIKER) ATTACHED TO IT, HAS ARRIVED ONE FULL DECADE AFTER *RETURN OF THE FROG QUEEN*, HIS DEBUT.

Ten years for a creative mind like Enigk is an eternity. Consider the maturity differential between a ten-year-old and a twenty-year-old. This gap illustrates the vast difference ten years can make in one person's life. Furthermore, our practice of breaking down cultural movements by decades is not just a handy way to segment human history into nice, neat even time blocks. Think about how the '80s weren't anything like the '70s, just as the '60s were far more radical than the '50s. Changes sometimes occur at an exponential rate, and cataloging human history by the decade is one good way to try and get a handle on it.

Enigk – who converted to Christianity in the mid-'90s – says he has especially grown spiritually since his first solo flight.

"In the past ten years I've become more of an adult, for one thing," Enigk states. "I don't live as much in guilt for who I am, and I try to accept who I am and approve who I am. I guess that's what I sort of mean about growing spiritually. Also, in a theological way my mind has opened up a lot."

It takes more than mere amassed time to accrue measurable personal growth, however. We all know people that appear to be stuck in a time warp – such as '60s baby boomers – who never grow out of their tie die shirts and Birkenstock sandals. Time plus many other factors were on Enigk's side during his recent maturation.

"It's reading books," Enigk explains. "It's hanging out with people. It's world events, which ultimately changed me and opened up my heart and mind. I'm not as dogmatic, I think, as I used to be. I used to believe more in the religious aspect of spirituality. Now, I don't really adhere to specific sects or organizations. I try to cling more to the real teachings of love and the real message that's being said, but not the religious rituals."

For better or for worse, Enigk's music has always been more influential than popular. Sunny Day Real Estate was beloved by a loyal following, although it never amassed big record sales. SDRE bassist Nate Mendel and drummer William Goldsmith eventually tasted the big time after joining Dave Grohl's Foo Fighters. But Sunny Day Real Estate, much like Weezer, Fugazi and a few others, also helped inspire the whole emo movement – for whatever that association is worth. Enigk's inspiration on the emerging emo

genre is mostly due to his quieter musical approach, as it greatly contrasted with the grunge movement that shared a parallel beginning with Enigk's emergence. Thankfully, he has never exhibited any of the annoying whininess associated with so many of the b-level emo bands that followed after him.

The worst emo is crammed with too much navel-gazing, self-interest. But the global title of Enigk's new CD, *World Waits*, suggests he has a far wider artistic perspective on life. He realizes Jeremy Enigk is not the center of the universe. It is a big world out there, and Enigk wants to explore it all – if possible. "Call out every nation," he sings (during "Burn"), "Call out every heart," he continues.

"It is about the world and its current state right now," he explains. "It was fully inspired by world events. In a perfect world, I would definitely love to know more about the specifics of politics. As boring as that is, it would be helpful to help make a positive change and make politics better. I don't really understand politics as much as I just see wars going on and stupidity; especially with the modern war that's going on right now between America and Iraq. It's absurd. The whole thing. I just can't believe that people actually resort to these means to try to make change. And it's really about business and money in the end. And power and control."

While all this ugliness is going on around him, Enigk is miraculously still able to create beautiful music. *World Waits* is a lushly orchestrated project, which includes an abundance of strings. Additionally, there is organ, glockenspiel and tubular bells. Obviously, Enigk's muse is much deeper than that of your typical, four-piece band rock & roller.

Enigk's new opus brings to mind other sonically expansive contemporary artists, like The Beach Boys' Brian Wilson and likeminded others who forge an extended connection between pop tunes and philharmonic impulses. But one of Enigk's primary influences this time out – and it is an unusual one at that – can be traced back to a live action film about a cartoon character, and most importantly of all, the man behind that movie's soundtrack.

"There's this guy Harry Nilsson, who wrote the *Popeye* soundtrack to that movie with Robin Williams. It's like a huge influence on my music, just that soundtrack of *Popeye*," Enigk says. "If

you haven't seen it for a while, rent it and listen to the music and it's incredible!"

Popeye is one of Enigk's more left field influences. Nevertheless, there are other tracks in Enigk's iPod far more predictable and familiar than Robert Altman film music.

"I listen to Beethoven and Mozart," Enigk says. "But I'll also listen to rock music, like The Who or U2 or Bob Dylan or John Lennon. You know, the list goes on."

Putting musical inspirations aside for a moment, it is obvious that musicians see and experience life differently from the rest of humankind. Enigk's focus on the music from *Popeye* should not be all that surprising. In fact, I once had a musician tell me that a track on his band's new edgy, alternative album was inspired by the closing theme music to *The Incredible Hulk* TV program. Most "normal" people watched that cheesy program and only concentrated on its comic book, superhero visuals. Not so with this uniquely wired musician, however. Oh no. He took away from it a melodic mood that haunted him. So much so, in fact, this boob tubular haunting seeped into his art. Incredible!

Enigk realizes musicians are a special breed.

"I don't want to pat myself on the back too much, but I've always considered musicians, like myself, as mathematicians of sorts that are able to come up with solutions to problems without ever actually working out the problem," he explains. "Music really just is a mathematical solution to '2+2 = solution,' but we never really work out the problem. We just make up the answer."

It is not unusual for, say, a pianist to also be math wiz, but Enigk is no great shakes when it comes to geometry, trigonometry, algebra and such.

"No, I'm terrible," admits Enigk, when asked about his math skills. "I can work math through my ear, but I can't do it on paper. I inherently know it, but I don't really understand its symbols. I can only understand it through musical notes."

Once again, Enigk's latest heart and soul equations on *World Waits* add up to beautifully mysterious solutions.







42 FEATURE



BY DAVID STAGG

BREMERTON MVPs

Photo: Jared Milgrim

MxPx

YOU SHOULD MOVE TO BREMERTON. IT'S IN WASHINGTON, ONLY A STONE'S THROW AWAY FROM SEATTLE, SANDWICHED NICELY BETWEEN THE PUGET SOUND AND EAST OF THE OLYMPIC MOUNTAINS. A LITTLE RAINY, THE GOOD DAY'S WORTH THE RAINY ONES. THE AREA IS EXPERIENCING A REVITALIZATION, WITH GALLERIES, THEATERS, CAFES, SHOPS, RESTAURANTS, AND MUSEUMS HIGHLIGHTING THE GROWING ARTS COMMUNITY IN THE AREA.

"It's home," Mike Herrera, bassist for MxPx says. "It's always getting better, not worse."

Herrera speaks worlds of Bremerton, the hometown to his band, where all the members of MxPx – Herrera, guitarist Tom Wisniewski and drummer Yuri Ruley – have houses, as well as a studio. They're even basing their new online store out of the area. "It's way less expensive than L.A," Herrera says. "We couldn't really afford to do much if we were struggling to pay a ridiculous mortgage."

It seems to work out alright; whatever's in the air there must have mists of the fountain of youth as MxPx, like their hometown, is also experiencing a revitalization of sorts. Their most recent studio album *Panic* has been penned by critics as a step in a good direction. Their former label Tooth and Nail re-released *Let It Happen*, MxPx's 1998 release, with all new-artwork and additional songs in November. In late October, MxPx released *Let's Rock*, a b-sides and rarities album, filled with unreleased and rare material, from acoustic demos to full-out, studio-produced songs. They shot a video for their song "Breathe Deep" off *Let's Rock* in – you guessed it – Bremerton. "We're moving it in-house," Herrera says.

Apparently it's been worth it to city officials, as well; the mayor gave them the keys to the city, and an organization dedicated to creating affordable housing opportunities has been allowed to use the MxPx song "Move to Bremerton" in ads. When the city came to the band and asked if they were planning on playing Bremerton anytime soon, the band said of course, and suggested a benefit show for the city. "We've always done a lot of stuff with our community," Herrera says, "whether it's just giving our merch to homeless shelters or helping out with a charity event. One year, we went and helped work at this ice cream shop, and all the money they made that day was donated to a charity. Stuff like that. Super simple stuff, like you see NFL football players doing randomly."

But next to zero NFL players have had the longevity MxPx has. Twelve years ago, while still in high school, the same group of guys that make up MxPx today released *Pokinatcha* just two years after starting the band. Fast forward to

today – fourteen years later – and the band has seen a lot of success, most notably with their single "Chick Magnet," a song topping off their third full-length release *Life in General*, which was recently named as one of the top ten punk albums of 1996 by Alternative Press. Ever since then, the band hasn't particularly looked back, continually releasing anthemic, punk-rock albums to where now, they can safely say they've achieved veteran status.

The original *Let It Happen* MxPx compilation was released in 1998, now re-released with a facelift. "It's the deluxe edition," Herrera says. "You get three-brand new songs, and I want to say three of our original first recordings ever, the first time we ever recorded in a studio."

"Untouched?" I ask.

"Untouched. I listened to them before I gave them the go ahead," he says. "I mean, it is what it is. It comes with a DVD of all of our videos to date, and it also comes with all new artwork. We're trying to do everything we do nowadays to be collectible."

And it's not like the band has let up these days, either; even today, Herrera speaks slowly and methodically, a lot on his mind. He has to call back because he has to finish up some business from a previous phone call. He records bands in their studio: "Been doing a lot of producing of other bands," he says. "I just did a small band from Florida, done a lot of local stuff. Always talking to bands online. I'm looking to open up a more full-time studio, and have someone engineer while I'm not there." He has to find time to write songs for an upcoming 2007 MxPx release: "We've been working on a new album right now," Herrera says. "I've been writing at home a bit, amidst all the other millions of things I have to do. It's kind of hard to sit down, but I've been able to do a little bit."

Herrera estimates he gets to spend about three or four months of the year in his hometown, with his wife making visits to the band while on tour. It was on tour where they managed to find time to sing some harmonies and do overdubs for *Let's Rock* in their portable studio after completing most of the work in their hometown studio.

"It's kind of random," Herrera says of *Let's Rock*. "Random songs with weird parts to them. It doesn't really have that much of a cohesive feel as a studio album would, but because it's not really a studio album – it's a rarities album – there really are no rules to be broken. In that way, it actually kind of works in its favor. I think kids are going to like it just for what it is: They're going to really like the songs."

For a band to make it fourteen years (and counting) is almost an anomaly these days. Quick fame, heavy pressure, substance abuse – they've all taken out good bands early. But MxPx has had a steady rise to the top where they've consistently managed to stay ahead of the curve and remain relevant in an extremely fast-paced business – with the attention span of a gnat. So, then, two questions arise:

1) Ever think about calling it quits?

It's a question Herrera says has obviously fluttered through his brain. "The thought does cross my mind every once in a while," he says. "You know, it's one of those things where... anything you do – if you do it too much, no matter what it is – even if it's watching TV and eating ice cream, you could get sick of it. You know, at that point you want to do something else. Yeah, at times I do feel that way, but at the same time, there's not too many other jobs I'd rather do. At least, that's realistic."

2) Then how do you make it work?

"We secretly go to rehab every year," Herrera says and laughs. "It has definitely grown into something other than what it started out as," he continues. "(It's) our careers now, rather than just a hobby. When we started out, it was all about these new experiences. Nowadays, it's about having a good life, being happy... It's obviously different now, but at the same time, the one thing that keeps us together is the music. When we get in there and start playing music, or when we get on stage, that's what it's all about."



44 FEATURE

BY ANDREW SCHWAB

WILD-EYED SOUTHERN BOYS

The Sho

showdown

MY FIRST INTRODUCTION TO THE FIVE DOWN-HOME, TENNESSEE-BRED CHARACTERS THAT ARE THE SHOWDOWN WAS FROM THE VANTAGE POINT OF THE AUDIENCE, AT A SHOW. I DIDN'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE BAND, REALLY, OTHER THAN THE FACT THAT THEY WERE METAL. THEY TOOK THE STAGE – AND I HAVE TO BE HONEST – BEFORE THEY BEGAN PLAYING I EXPECTED TO BE PUT TO SLEEP BY ANOTHER OF THE ENDLESS BARRAGE OF WHAT HAS BECOME THE NEW, NU-METAL; THE BRAND OF HEAVY MUSIC THAT I HAVE DEEMED “SQUEEL-CORE” (I AM SURE YOU KNOW TO WHAT I REFER...THE BRAND OF MUSIC THAT EVERY LOCAL OPENING BAND PLAYS IN EVERY TOWN ACROSS THE UNITED STATES. THESE BANDS SOUNDED LIKE P.O.D FIVE YEARS AGO, BUT NOW THEY ALL SOUND LIKE NORMA JEAN). BUT, AS THE SHOWDOWN APPEARED ONSTAGE AND DONNED THEIR INSTRUMENTS, A STRANGE, WERE-WOLFIAN TRANSFORMATION BEGAN TO TAKE PLACE.

The Showdown became superheroes right before my eyes.

Not superheroes in the Batman or Spiderman sense. Not real-life, big screen superheroes. I am talking cartoon superheroes. Animated. Colorful. Almost too colorful for real life. Like vikings.

And as lead vocalist David Bunton approached the mic – long sleeved flannel and all – he held his hand behind his back, hiding something. His blond locks waved to the beat of the double-bass as he prepared for his first moment to roar. As the band built into this moment I squinted my eyes, trying to figure out what character he reminded me of. I couldn't quite place it. I thought for several moments about this as the instruments wailed.

Then, out of nowhere, just as his first scream began, he whipped out a foam metal fist (for those of who do not know, the metal fist is made by extending the pinky and index fingers while keeping your other fingers balled – more commonly known in fundamentally religious circles as “the sign of the devil”) that was at least three feet tall. It was like something you would see at a baseball game, except this baseball game starred metal vikings. I almost fell on the floor I was laughing so hard.

Then it came to me: Their lead singer was The Mighty Thor.

It was at that moment that I realized I loved this band. And it was also at that moment that I realized that The Showdown, southern drawls and all, were geniuses; They were as much entertainers as they were artists. Not only did they have some cool tunes which didn't sound like the rest of heavy music today, but they portrayed themselves as rock n' rollers should; they were caricatures, larger-than-life reflections of star power. I would find out later that the phrase “star pow-

er” is not only their definition, but it is their favorite catch-phrase as well.

I caught up with lead vocalist David Bunton and bass player Eric Koruschak recently to discuss their favorite catch phrases, their new album (titled *Temptation Come My Way*), and what it's like to witness a drive-by shooting.

Schwab: So what's the latest?

Bunton: We're extremely pumped to get our new album out and go on the road. We have a tour that is about to start with none other than Pillar. We are so ready to get our tribal on, our mosh on, and our killer on. It's the Pillar and Day of Fire tour; October 25 through December 17. We went out with Haste the Day and It Dies Today last June and did all the summer fests. Then we did some short headlining runs. We've taken a little time off to finish mixing the record, now we are ready to tour like mad men.

Talk to me about the new disc. Why did it take so long to finish?

Koruschak: Basically, because we want everything to be perfect. We started writing in January '05, started tracking in January '06 and the record is coming out in February '07. We just didn't want to go in and spit out another record. We have to give the best possible product. And to do that we pretty much had to go through hell and back ... every single aspect of making this record has been a huge obstacle. The last record was basically a collection of riffs separated into songs. This time we wanted to focus on the overall songs instead of the individual parts. So we used all the elements of songwriting we ignored last time around; we stepped up the vocals, and spent a lot of time arranging. We all spent time in the woodshed getting better at playing our instruments. We focused on melody and dynamic, and we stepped out of the comfort zone to write something that still felt heavy, but that wasn't frantic or overstepping its bounds. Heavy is about

feel, and we know you're gonna feel it.

You guys have woodsheds?

Bunton: Yeah, man. They are killer.

So, talk to me about your catch phrases...“killer,” “tribal,” “jammin' for the Lamb,” “star power,” “high voltage,” and “777, 24-7.” What is being “killer” and “high voltage” all about?

Bunton: It's a way of life, a mindset, kind of like giving 110%, 110% of the time. We absolutely tour to the extreme and we always tear... I mean, it's all about how we roll. Even in our leisure time we take it to the tribal. We kick back in vacation time with dirt bikes, grills in our van, pickups, and smaller, gas-powered pocket bikes for cruising around the city. We try to take every opportunity to hang with people and get to know new people and hang loose. There are so many elements to it ... it's just ... killer. We know there's no promise of us doing this 6 months down the road. That's why we take it the extreme.

Koruschak: We try to take everything we do, whether in the band or out of it, to the extreme and do it to the best of our ability. We took over a year to make this record. We want everything to be as killer, as extreme, as tribal as possible. We are still finalizing the art and it was due two months ago. We give as much as we can and try to have as much possible fun as we can. We try to ride go-karts at least 3 times a week on tour. I don't want to say we slept in the van for 10 months on tour looking back.

Speaking of tour, what ranks as your most memorable moment on the road?

Bunton: One time on our very first tour we found ourselves broken down in Compton, California. It was, straight-up, off of FRIDAY. We met this awesome dude in the hood and he fixed our van and we stayed at this ghetto hotel – rent by the hour, crack, prostitutes. We were in a drive-by shooting

"By high voltage, I mean jammin' for the Lamb."

when we were waiting to have our van fixed. We were on the street and a black Lincoln roles up – and no joke, these dudes rolled up with machine guns. The shooting lasted for five minutes ... guns going off just yards from us. They were shooting across the street, and there were a bunch of honest-to-goodness mountain boys hitting the deck. The most crazy part was that we were the only ones freaking out. Every one else around was like, "Yeah, that's just the norm."

I would have to say my second favorite moment was in the studio this past year. We grilled every single day, and we went to a 24-hour fitness every single day ... escorted by our personal trainer, Andrew Hall. You CANNOT be high voltage without pumping iron and eating fresh. It's impossible!

Koruschak: You have to take care of the machine.

Bunton: If we were in Compton and our reaction times were slow, we could have been killed.

Koruschak: You have to be solid in mind, body and spirit. By solid, I mean high voltage.

Bunton: By high voltage, I mean jammin' for the Lamb.

Koruschak: By jammin for the Lamb, I mean 777.

(laughing wildly) I see...so, talk to me a little about about where you guys are at spiritually.

Bunton: As far as that goes, we are pretty, like, into it. I think that, for the most part, that's why we do the band. All of us guys, we are just dudes and ol' boys and rough around the edges, but the reason why we do jam is that we feel this is a mission trip. The way the band

came together – it's no coincidence how things have happened. It's all God. I know every single person is owned by God. It's easy to get in the motion of touring and lose focus, but it makes you think if someone is like, "I got saved listening to your disc." That gets you right back on track. It's just like ... God is for real using the five of the most crazy dudes in the world who don't deserve it ... if you wake up in a ditch every day until the day you die, God will still be there for you. I think it's crazy that our band is still together. That's enough evidence for me.

Koruschak: Every person in our band makes it a point to hang out with the people at the show. It's not at all important for us to give a message or an altar call from stage or tell someone why they are wrong, but it's insanely important to have interaction with people at our shows. We don't care what people are doing wrong, We just want people to see that we are just like those kids and the kids know we are on the same level. We have gone through the same things those kids have gone through, but at the end of the day none of that matters, because we have hope beyond any situation we or our fans are in. We want to be honest and let people see us for who are. We don't have anything to hide. It's been the hardest thing in the world for us to finish this record and everything has been a huge trial. We don't want sympathy, but I can completely relate to the average kid who wants to give up. When you are going through hard times it seems so real, but we want to be light hearted and no matter what you do, no matter how many times you screw it up, the Lord is there...

Look for the new album from The Showdown *Temptation Come My Way* on February 20.

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48 HIP-HOP FEATURE

SINTAX.THE.TERRIFIC

A CURIOUS BLEND

BY BRENTEN GILBERT



DRESSED IN HIS FINEST CHOCOLATE BROWN SUIT AND TIE, MILD-MANNERED LAWYER JOE BREWER SETTLES INTO HIS OFFICE, PREPARED TO FACE ANOTHER DAY OF LEGAL WORK. THOUGH HIS FOCUS IS CLEARLY ON THE TASKS BEFORE HIM, SOMEWHERE IN THE BACK OF HIS MIND AND THE SLEEP IN HIS EYES IS A REMINDER OF LAST NIGHT'S ESCAPADES WHEN, AFTER TUCKING HIS THREE CHILDREN SAFELY INTO BED AND KISSING HIS WIFE GOODBYE, BREWER SET OFF INTO THE NIGHT, DONNING THE GARB OF HIS ALTER-EGO, SINTAX.THE.TERRIFIC.

While he's not exactly a superhero, rapper Syntax does manage to balance two careers that seem to be at opposite ends of the societal spectrum. "I think a lot more people in our generation have figured out that they can sort of play the game a little bit and make sure that they provide for their family," says Syntax of his double life, "but at the same time aren't afraid to pursue their passions." He adds, "There are a lot of people who are trying to find a balance between their profession and their passion."

This balancing act isn't always easy, but it's manageable with the help of determination and prioritizing. "As a believer, God is most important in my life," explains Syntax, "and my family is next in line. I always have to make sure that those things receive first treatment." While an everyday routine might seem slightly boring or mundane at times, for Syntax, these actions speak directly to his responsibilities as a husband, a father and a man of God. "Once you kind of identify where your priorities are, it all kind of falls into place," he concludes.

It also helps when some of life's compartments overlap. Syntax sees many similarities between his careers as a lawyer and as a rapper, as well as his motivation to continue pursuing both fields. "Most of them have something to do with communicating with words and with the aesthetic of your presentation and all those sorts of things," he explains. "They are way more similar disciplines than people initially think." He continues, "The real problem is the perception that culturally they are totally incompatible, but you can use any medium – whether it's the law or music – to express all varieties of perspectives on life."

Both jobs afford Syntax the opportunity to communicate his thoughts and beliefs with persuasive words shaped into a creative presentation. "There's a theatrical element to both [rapping and practicing law]," says Syntax. As a rapper, Syntax is able to reflect on the things that he cares about in life. "Whether it is stupid stuff like sports or whether it is really important stuff like my faith and my relationship with God," he explains further, "it's a powerful medium." Syntax also enjoys practicing law, because it allows him to put his fingerprint on the justice system of America; a system that he openly admits is flawed. "I would never sit here and try to defend it [as perfect] by any stretch of the imagination," he shares. "But at this point, it's one of the best systems of secular

conflict resolution the world has to offer."

Though you may not ever experience Joe Brewer in the courtroom, fans of hip-hop are able to experience the craft of Syntax.the.terrific via CD. Whether it's his contribution to the hip-hop collective known as Deepspace5, his early work as a member of The Pride, or his solo releases, Syntax has been writing and performing since he was a young teenager in Columbia, MD. His latest effort, titled *Curb Appeal*, will soon be in stores and is the result of a three-year writing process.

Three years may seem like a long time, but there are benefits to patiently creating an album over time. "The nice thing about the passage of time is that just means there is that much more input in your life to have a spectrum of concepts or song ideas throughout the album that are really kind of full blown." Syntax continues, "[Rather than] drawing from a snapshot in time. . . you just have that much more time to kind of let things marinate and kind of come to fruition."

That effort and patience has paid off in the form of an eighteen-track project that's full of depth and richness both lyrically and musically. "You want something that is initially sort of appealing to the senses, but then has some depth to it," Syntax says. "Sometimes you get there and sometimes you don't." Though he's slow to tip his proverbial hand and reveal the intentions behind each song, the album offers a very personal glimpse at Syntax as well as themes of redemption and practical advice about following God.

Syntax also plans to take his own advice and give back to his own community. Rather than touring with his new album, he's content to perform local shows, staying true to his priorities. "I really want to sow into my community up here and throughout the state and a little bit more in the region," he explains. "[I want to] get the record into as many kids' hands as possible and to be able to invest in them personally."

On the surface, a lawyer/rapper might seem self-contradictory, but in this case, they complement each other nicely, cementing Syntax's unique identity. Perhaps the song "Moonlighting" puts it most appropriately: "I was born to be a curious blend."



BEATS

[hip-hop news 'n' reviews by SphereofHipHop.com]

Sphere of Hip Hop will be hitting the XM airwaves in early 2007 with a 2-hour radio show. Look for occasional guest DJs that will spin 1 hour of the finest hip-hop around in a special mix format.

GRITS is back with an all-new 12 track album that features a host of talent. **Pigeon John**, **bTwice** and **Antonio Neal** lend their talents on the mic. Mainstream hip-hop artist Can-I-Bus even drops some vocals on a track. *Redemption* is in stores now on Gotee Records. (grits7.com / gotee.com)

Verbs (fka Knowdaverbs) has some new tracks out and available. Your purchase even gives you a shot at winning a trip to Africa to accompany Verbs on some mission work. Check out the tunes because they are fresh and also check them out to support His work. (myspace.com/mrverbs)

If you are over the age of 25 and into hip-hop, you may have heard of a crew called **P.I.D.** (Preachas In Disguise). These guys broke into many spots that hip-hop had not previously touched, specifically the church. Now many years removed, one of the founding members, Fred Lynch is working on a unique way to share the Gospel. He took the entire book of John and translated it into hip-hop. I was skeptical at first, but after seeing him perform some of it, I am definitely sold. It will be titled *The Epic*. Look out for his book and accompanying music version to be published in 2008 by Zondervan. (sphereofhiphop.com)

Malachi Perez is finishing up some last minute work to his new album, *Love and Handgrenades*. Joining him on the album include notables like **Joey the Jerk**, **Great Json**, **Aloe Blacc**, **Mr. J of the Procussions** and others. Later this winter... (malachiperez.com)

Every November Tampa, FL is the home to a hip-hop conference called Fla.vor Fest, hosted by Crossover Community Church. Crossover is a pioneering urban church that seeks to engage young and old with a hip-hop vibe to everything they do. For three days it played host to a few thousand people from all parts of the industry and also many pastors. There were several insightful seminars during the daytime and then a bevy of great music at night. Dozens of artists performed on two stages Friday and Saturday night. Consider attending next year. Check out their website for more information on Fla.vor Fest in addition to their church. (flavoralliance.com)

2007 looks to be another great year for hip-hop. Be sure to give everything a shot and look out for plenty of newer artists on their way up like: **CZ**, **Scribbling Idiots**, **Craig Nice**, **Beyond Skillz**, **Rawsrvnt**, **Surreal**, **Illy Graham**, **Malachi Perez**, **k-Drama**, **Smoke** and dozens of others. Get a heavy dose of that news and information from this column and at Sphereofhiphop.com. Until next time... mind that rap!

THE PRAYER CHAIN

BY MIKE POSTMA

*From Whirlpool to
Beyond Mercury*

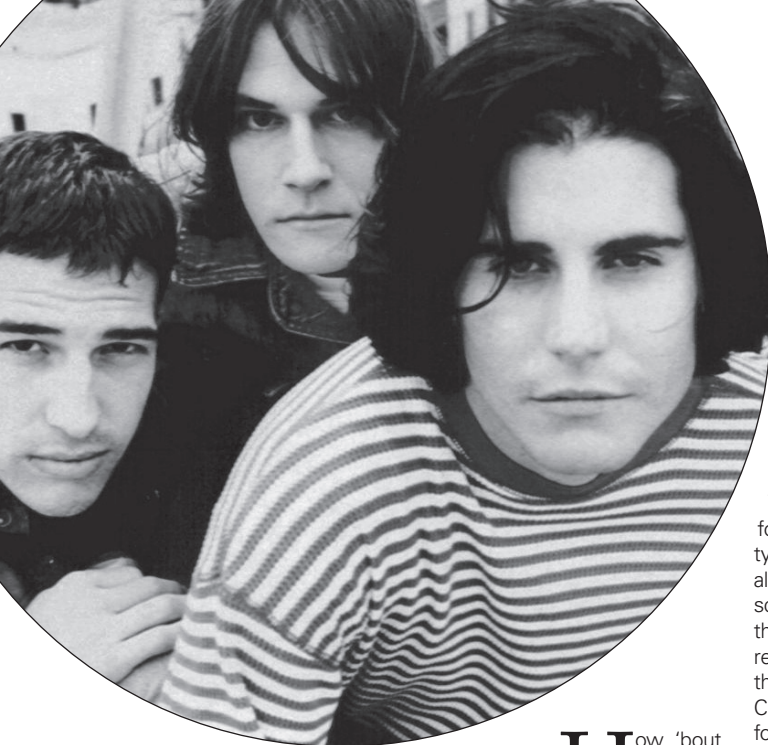
I AM A CHRISTIAN.

I AM NOT IN A ROCK BAND.

I HAVE NEVER BEEN IN A ROCK BAND.

THE CLOSEST I'VE COME IS A FEW MINI-TOURS WITH A FRIEND'S BAND, SO I CAN VAGUELY IMAGINE WHAT IT MUST BE LIKE TO DO ROCK AND ROLL FOR A LIVING, HAVING BEEN CRAMMED INTO A VAN WITH MULTIPLE STINKY DUDES AND A TON OF GEAR, AND BEING A VETERAN OF SHOWS OF ALL TYPES AND SIZES. AND AS A CHRISTIAN, THERE HAVE BEEN COUNTLESS TIMES WHEN I KNOW I'M THE ONLY BELIEVER IN THE ROOM, AND THE PRESSURE IS SOMETIMES VERY PRESENT TO BE A GOOD EXAMPLE, PARTICULARLY IF WORD GETS OUT. A LOT OF BANDS AND INDIVIDUALS ARE CALLED TO THAT—TO PLAY ANYWHERE BUT CHURCHES AND CHURCH-AFFILIATED VENUES AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN MUSIC FESTIVALS, SHARING STAGES WITH PEOPLE OF ALL WALKS OF LIFE, NOT JUST THE OFTEN-SACCHARINE YOUTH GROUP DEMOGRAPHIC.

ALL OF THIS, OF COURSE, IS TODAY, IN 2006.



THE PRAYER CH

fit in back in the early to mid-90s? It just wasn't the same sort of atmosphere back then in the United States, where the band did the majority of their touring.

Enormous megachurches booking every touring band in sight weren't as ubiquitous. Sound systems in those churches didn't sound all that hot. And on top of it all, the Chain just weren't into writing what we'd today call 'radio-friendly' songs – 'Humb' (from 1996's *Antarctica*) was five-plus minutes of droning, atmospheric noise. No vocals, guitars, nothing. Still, Taber is pretty sure his band would have found a niche – and as for today, with the mainstream's growing acceptance of fringe-type music, and particularly with Christian music executives' realization that you can sell some of these bands in the secular scene, it's a lock that the Prayer Chain would have found fans. "I think we'd probably have a better time," Tim agrees. "Christian record companies are becoming more savvy and more aware that there's a whole lot of people who like this music that aren't Christians, and I think there might have been more opportunity for us now to have that kind of career."

How 'bout
15 or 20
years

ago? Things weren't nearly as cut and dried and ready-to-serve as they are nowadays; the Christian Music Industry (capitals mine) wasn't a billion-dollar behemoth in the United States (and increasingly so worldwide), and there surely wasn't quite the level of sniping and cries of "sellout!" when a band happened to "get lucky" and got booked for a secular tour or a major festival. I, for one, wouldn't mind going back to that simpler, scrappier time.

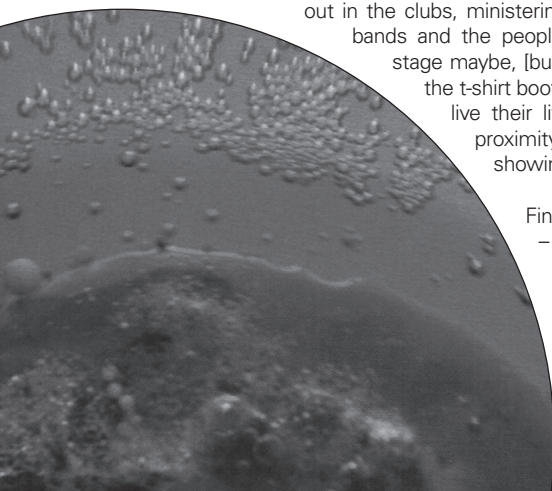
Emerging from the well-saturated early '90s Orange County music scene in California, The Prayer Chain's trailblazing shadow is long in the Christian music scene. In much the same way Black Flag established a touring circuit for the punk rock community twenty years ago, the Chain helped pave the way for today's tidal wave of Christian rock bands and wrote songs with atmosphere, rock and roll swagger and lasting quality. Many a lifer will quote 1995's *Shawl* (Reunion) as the first impactful Christian rock record they ever invested their own hard-earned dime in, this writer among them, and they'll all be happy to know that lead singer Tim Taber is still very active in the community of Christian rock and roll, establishing Floodgate Records in his home state of California. And though the "us separated from them" mentality in Christian music was just starting to germinate when his band was in their prime, today, at an annual festival where I spent a few minutes with him, he's adamant on the issue of being salt and light in a world growing increasingly dark. "It seems like there's a different dynamic where there's two kinds of Christian bands," he says. "There's the 'Christian band' that exists to play youth groups, to play churches and to minister directly from the stage. And then there's a whole group of bands that are solid Christian guys, but that's not their calling – their calling is to be out in the clubs, ministering to non-Christian bands and the people there, from the stage maybe, [but] more likely from the t-shirt booth or just how they live their lives in such close proximity to others on tour, showing God's love."

Fine, okay, great – where would the Prayer Chain have

Interestingly enough, as have some other band guys before him, Taber has gone on to found his own Floodgate label, and even more interestingly, while there's certainly a strong focus on the Christian market, most of his bands past and present are no strangers to shady establishments. "Part of my job as a record-company guy is to encourage [my bands] in their walk with Christ," he says, "but I love nothing more than to hear stories about them being out in bars and clubs, either ministering to other bands or just people that come up to them." Which isn't to discredit those artists who are simply sure of their calling to tour North America and the world in the company of other Christian performers – it's vitally necessary. "I certainly think there's validity to bands that wanna exist in the Christian culture and lift up youth group kids and adults," Tim says. "That's really important. And I guess there's a third segment of 'Christian bands', which is worship, that are totally valid and mainly exist within churches and stuff, but I don't discount the potential for worship to go beyond Christians, like Delirious, who strive for excellence in what they do to the point where they're accepted outside the Christian circles in Europe."

So, um, Tim, homeboy – of these three established segments of professional or semipro Christian musicians, where would you place yourself and the Prayer Chain? "We probably played around five hundred shows and I think I gave two altar calls in my entire life," Taber says. "I always prayed before every show, that hopefully I would be surprised, that maybe in a club I would have been led to preach, which I totally wouldn't have expected. Or at a youth group, to simply say nothing at all. Sometimes we would just talk about what the songs meant to us. [Those altar calls happened] just because I really, really felt like that's what God wanted us to do. I was scared to death and didn't wanna do it, but I felt like God was prompting me."

Following the demise of his band, Taber bounced around California, still involved with music, but not at the full-time level. "I think I got to a point in life where I couldn't do the entry-level, 'go play a million shows and make no money' thing, because I was married by that time and it's a whole different dynamic," he says. "Right after the Prayer Chain, I started getting really into worship music, and wrote a batch of songs with Jyro [Xhan] of Mortal and Fold Zandura, and we were thinking about doing a record that never materialized. I consulted for Brainstorm Artists, Gene Eugene's label, and it went from there to managing bands like The Insyderz



and

starting a concert-promotion company in California."

Given the



Prayer Chain's pioneering a few shorts years before, it's perhaps no surprise that those Insyderz were at the forefront of the mid to late 90s ska-core movement, one of the few such revolutions since the genesis of Christian rock that Christian bands actually helped foment instead of tailgating on several years hence. Spearheaded by the Mighty Mighty Bosstones, The OC Supertones and – early in their career – a little band called No Doubt, the wave lasted, in retrospect, far longer than most, and the Detroit-based Insyderz stayed together about ten years, putting out several well-received albums before calling it a day in October 2005.

And Mr. Tim Taber, in overseeing their affairs, hearing about other upstart young bands through other managers and settling into the management side of professional music, had a chance to see how different things were becoming.

"It's funny to me," he muses. "I'm a veteran; I think I can say that about myself now, and it's funny when I see kids complaining about drives, and sleeping on floors, and bad food. I'm like, 'Man, you're in a rock and roll band for a living – that's pretty cool.' Being in a rock band is a heck of a lot of fun. It doesn't matter that you're making a thousand dollars a month – because the most we ever made was, like, twelve hundred bucks a month, and you can't really make a living on that. It's a trade-off, you know? To have the opportunity to do what we did, I think, is a privilege."

And then God arranged a providential meeting with someone who would change the course of Taber's life – not to be overdramatic about this. "I met a worship leader named Rita Springer, and I thought she was exceptional," Taber says. "I tried to get her signed and couldn't, so I started my own label. That was six years ago." Floodgate Records has since made its name as a reliable source of quality modern rock and been home to several notable acts, including indie heroes Cool Hand Luke, the now-defunct and criminally-underrated Denison Mairs, fellow Floridians Forever Changed and new blood like Hundred Year Storm and The Myriad – and these kids have a common theme: they have the potential, in today's marketplace, to sell as many copies of one of their albums as the Prayer Chain sold as an aggregate.

"I was hanging out with the Third Day guys," Tim begins. "They opened for us a few times, and I really encouraged Reunion to sign them – and we were talking about their new record, and how they'll probably sell 65,000 records in the first week. I said, 'Do you guys understand that if you combined all the sales of the Prayer Chain, it would probably be around a hundred thousand, and you guys will sell 65,000 in one week?'"

In his new career as a concert promoter, manager and now label president, Taber has seen a lot that's made him glad the Prayer Chain had help in the early going. "We were fortunate to have guys out in California, veterans like the Choir and Mike Knott who told us the ins and outs of record deals – what to look for," Tim affirms. "And about publishing, making sure we got a good lawyer. And we did – we paid a heck of a lot of money and it was worth every dollar." Now he's in a position to treat his bands well – to be as supportive as humanly possible. "We try to be different," Tim says of Floodgate. "I try to give deals like I would have worked them as an artist."

The typical route is that the label will throw out the worst deal possible for the band, and if they sign it, they've signed it, and it's not immoral or unethical, because



that band had the chance to examine that contract and negotiate that contract and get a lawyer, and it's up to the band to decide whether they wanna accept the terms or not. We don't do that at Floodgate. The deal we offer is the deal we offer; there's not a whole lot to negotiate. We try to build in long-term things like profit-sharing from the get-go. Bands don't have to negotiate for five rounds – we just give it to them up front."

When asked if there are any horror stories about the Prayer Chain's negotiations with their old label – this story being written by a Canadian hockey fan who watched the entire 2004-05

NHL season tank due to lawyers and money and therefore despises such things – Taber is effusive in his praise for the venerable Reunion Records.

"I always thought Reunion was a great for us," he

"I always thought Reunion was a great for us," he

re-mem-bers.

"Compared to a lot of other bands, we got a lot of money to make records and pretty much do whatever we wanted.

On *Mercury*, they wanted us to go in and record some more songs, and we did, but [overall] I think they granted us a lot of freedom. They weren't well-versed in rock and roll and how to market that, but they tried really hard, and I think we got a fair deal."

A couple of days before I talked with Tim Taber, I had a conversation with a fellow festival attendee, someone who professed to be really hugely into Christian music, and he had no idea who Five Iron Frenzy were. Hailing from the center of the USA in Denver, Colorado, FIF had eight great years making music, and

only played their last show in 2003 – a mere three years ago. It made me wonder if a band that had broken up closer to ten years ago held any sway over increasingly short memories – and Tim came up with an anecdote that perfectly addressed the question. "I don't remember who I was talking to last night," his story begins, "someone from Copeland, I think, but he was like, 'Dude, I don't want to offend you, but I saw some guy, about forty-seven years old, bald head, wearing a Prayer Chain tie-dye shirt,' and I was like, 'Yeah, man, that's our fans!'" And while the humor level is high, it's important to realize that Tim's band's openly Christian stance, regardless of where they were playing, meant that, like every troupe of Christian kids rocking some dead-end bar today, they were witnessing every night. "Mainly I live my life and nobody ever brings up the Prayer Chain," Taber says. "At home in Los Angeles, maybe twice a year someone will recognize me or something. Of course at Cornerstone, maybe a couple people a day because we played here so often. I think the main people that remember the Prayer Chain are band members, and I love the fact that there are a lot of bands that come up and say, 'Man, your band meant so much to me,' or 'The *Shawl* album was the first Christian CD I ever bought, and it changed the way I look at music,' or 'I still listen to *Mercury* at least once a month.' It's encouraging. It makes me think that we made art with lasting significance.

"We were really committed to creating something that wasn't ordinary and challenging what was happening at the time, and making sure that we turned in a record that really challenged our listeners."

Somewhere on the internet I read that the Prayer Chain, back in their prime, once played a new annual festival called *Lollapalooza*, put together by Jane's Addiction frontman/guru Perry Farrell. Truth or fiction? Vile rumor, according to Tim, but the fact is, with the Chain's style of eclectic, multifaceted rock music, this could actually have gone down. "It's funny," Tim says. "The legend of the Prayer Chain is so much bigger than the Prayer Chain. It's funny that people thought we were this big band, maybe because they came to Cornerstone and there'd be three thousand people watching us, but most of our shows were to three hundred people. Some of our shows were to twenty-seven people."

Boasting some of the most talented, inventive musicians around, Tim Taber's former band, regardless of how many people were watching, never wavered from making great rock music with a timeless message – and most of them, especially guitarist Andy Prickett and drummer Wayne Everett, remain full-time musicians, whether it's as session players, part-time band members or producers. So would a full-blown Prayer Chain reunion show or tour be likely to happen? "I don't think so," Tim says. "We did play a few years ago – the Flevo Festival in Holland asked if we would ever come back, and it's pretty hard to turn down a free trip to Holland, so we did that, and we played Cornerstone. I got a videotape of the show in Holland, and it really wasn't that good. (laughter) I thought we were awesome that night, and I look at the footage and go, 'Yeah, we're not that good. Let's leave the memory intact and not be the old fat guys trying to re-live our glory days.'"





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What Moby Says

MOBY JUST RELEASED *GO: THE VERY BEST OF MOBY*. IN ADDITION TO COMPILING THE HITS, THIS TWO-DISC SET ALSO CONTAINS 11 REMIXES OF MOBY MUSIC. AS AN ARTIST, HE IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CATEGORIZE. HIS MUSIC TOUCHES UPON TECHNO, PUNK, AMBIENT ELEMENTS, AND ALMOST EVERYTHING IN BETWEEN. HE IS ALSO THOUGHTFUL AND WELL SPOKEN. MOBY, WHO WAS IN COPENHAGEN, SPOKE TO DAN MACINTOSH OVER THE PHONE ABOUT MUSIC, RELIGION, POLITICS, AND A LITTLE LITERATURE.



Photo: Danny Clinch

Hey Moby, where are you?

I'm in Copenhagen right now.

How do you like it there?

It's probably the fifteenth or twentieth time I've been here.

You've just released a 'best of' CD. Does it make you feel old to have a career retrospective disc out now?

It's not that soon. The actual first record I put out was in 1984. I put out a little record with a band named AWOL. I think we maybe printed up 200 copies. The first record that came out under my name was in 1990, so that was sixteen years ago.

So, do you feel old?

I feel old. But I partially feel old because I've been making records under my own name for sixteen years.

When you look back on your career so far, what would you say are your greatest accomplishments?

It's hard to say. I mean, the truth is I never expected to have a career as a musician. I always thought that I'd maybe be, I don't know, working in a record store and making music in my spare time that no one would ever listen to. One of the most exciting things that ever happened to me was actually getting my first ever record deal. It was in 1989 and I got signed to this tiny, tiny label in New York called Instinct Records. And I still remember how excited I was when they offered

the record deal to me because I never thought anyone would offer a record deal to me. Even with the fact that, at the time, they didn't have an office, they didn't have a name, they'd never put out any records.

It sounds to me like you've never outgrown just being a great big music fan. Is that true?

Well, that's the reason I do what I do because I love listening to music. I love making music. There are a lot of things about the music business I don't like very much.

Allmusic.com begins its bio of you like this: "Moby is one of the most controversial figures in techno music, alternately praised for bringing a face to the notoriously anonymous electronic genre, as well as being scorned by hordes of techno artists and fans for diluting and trivializing the form." How do react to that statement?

That sounds like it was written a long time ago because there was a period throughout the '90s where I was criticized a lot within the dance music community. And now I don't get criticized a lot. The most of the criticism tends to come from outside the dance music community.

If you were to characterize the kind of musician that you are, how would you describe what you do?

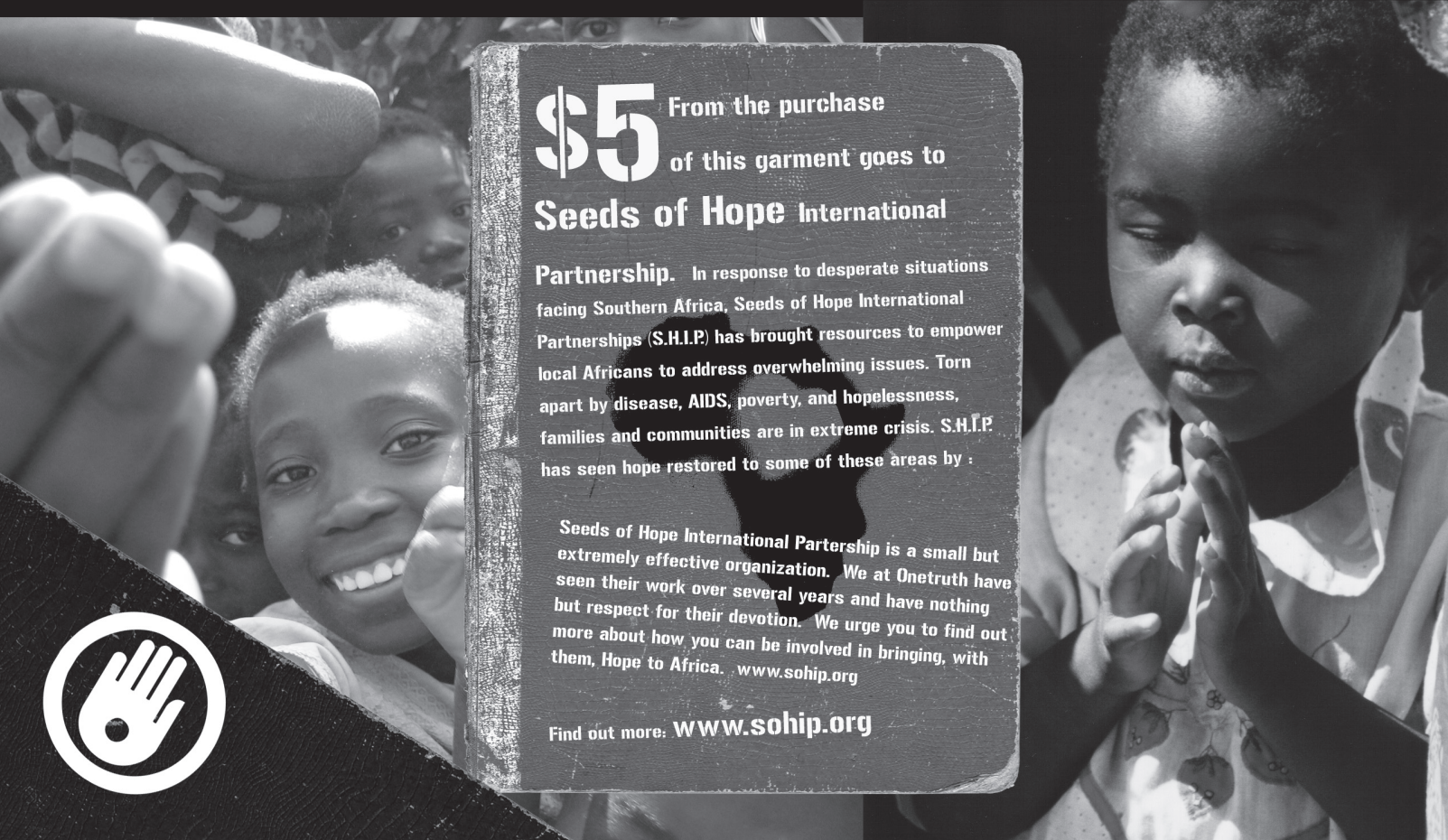
I would not know how to characterize the type of musician that I am. I played classical music when I was very young. I played in punk rock bands, and I studied music theory. I've done so many different types of music; I wouldn't know how to characterize it.



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Find out more: www.sohip.org



I heard that you're working on new music now. How would you describe what you're doing these days?

I can just repeat what I just said. I think the music I'm working on is very eclectic. Some of it's very dance oriented. Some of it's more punk rock oriented. Some of it's very quiet and atmospheric. The only way I can describe myself as a musician is I'm not sure that I'm good or bad at what I do; I guess I'm pretty eclectic.

What kind of music are you listening to these days?
Everything.

Are there any artists out there that you've discovered that you think deserve more attention?

The whole idea of giving things more attention is that a lot of times when things receive more attention, they get corrupted. A lot of times if I hear something that is really good and really precious, I almost hope that no one else discovers it so they remain relatively uncorrupted.

good at it.

You've been described as "infamous for your devout, radical Christian beliefs." Do you still call yourself a Christian?

I call myself a Christian in the very simple, naïve sense of the word. I haven't found a denomination or a church that I agree with. But I still, to this day, love the character and the teachings of Christ. I find them to be incredibly, radically revolutionary.

What are your thoughts about some of the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, such as where Jesus claimed to be the way, the truth and the life, and that no man comes to the Father but by him? Do you agree with that?

You know what? I don't even know where my fingernails come from, so it's very hard for me to speak knowledgeably about grand objective truths about the universe.

posed to the teachings of Christ.

Do you ever read the Sojourner Magazine?

Yeah, I'm actually good friends with (editor) Jim Wallis.

He's sort of a voice crying in the wilderness because he doesn't get all the media attention that a lot of the Pat Robertsons unfortunately do. But I think he's starting to gain some momentum. I see a lot more of his ideas getting out there into the public forum, which I think is a positive thing, don't you think?

I remember there was some election when a bunch of Catholic Bishops said that they would no longer give communion to people who were pro choice. First of all, it was not their choice to deny communion; it's for God to decide. The other thing that surprised me was the Christ never mentioned abortion. So we don't know what Christ's opinion is on abortion. We can assume that maybe he's not a big fan of it, but we don't specifically know because it's

"I'm honestly utterly confused at how Christianity has been co-opted by right wing republicans. If you look at it objectively, Christ was a pacifist. Christ preached the virtues of humility and love and forgiveness. I just find it very odd that you have somehow a right wing republican agenda that's been forced upon the church. You have millions and millions of Christians who think that being a good Christian is being anti-gay and anti-democrat and pro war."

When you say that, that statement really makes you sound like a true music fan. It reminds me a little bit of back when I was in college and worked in college radio. And when we would discover a new artist or band that we loved, we almost want to keep it to ourselves because we thought this was sort of our band and once the rest of the world gets a hold of it, they won't appreciate it like we do.

On the other hand, there is so much great music has been corrupted by becoming successful. There's a strange dialectic between wanting to share things, and wanting to keep them private.

Many still may not know that Herman Melville is your great-great-great uncle. What part of his classic "Moby Dick" novel can you most relate to?

I tend to understand "Moby Dick" on a very metaphorical level, which is to say a very, very simple level. You have Ahab, who is sort of representing rigid 19th century rational thought. And he's sort of being driven crazy by the fact that there's this vast, chaotic world that he's unable to control. And on the other hand you have the whale, Moby Dick, representing this vast, sort of amoral uncontrollable world that tends to drive rationalists crazy.

Have you ever done any fiction writing yourself?

Yeah, I did a little bit in high school, but I was never very

Are you the kind of person that regularly reads the Bible or books that are about the Christian faith?

I've read the Bible many, many times, and I especially go back to the gospels in the New Testament more than anything else.

One of the problems I have with contemporary Christianity is how it aligns itself with particular political parties and political platforms that I don't happen to agree with. Is that one of the problems you have with finding a denomination you feel comfortable with?

I'm honestly utterly confused at how Christianity has been co-opted by right wing Republicans. If you look at it objectively, Christ was a pacifist. Christ preached the virtues of humility and love and forgiveness. I just find it very odd that you have somehow a right wing republican agenda that's been forced upon the church. You have millions and millions of Christians who think that being a good Christian is being anti-gay and anti-democrat and pro war. But, as we all know, in the gospels Christ never mentioned homosexuality. He might have been anti-gay; he might have been neutral on the subject. We have no idea. But it's very strange that the right wing Christian church in the United States is focused on things Christ never talked about, while they seem to do their best to ignore things he actually did talk about. To call themselves Christians and be pro death penalty, pro war, pro tax cuts for the wealthiest and anti-environment -- those things are actually diametrically op-

not in the gospels. But Christ did talk about divorce. Christ said that under almost no circumstances is divorce to be permitted. But yet many, many Christians are divorced. So how is it that people so flagrantly disregard things that Christ actually did talk about, yet base an agenda on what Christ never said? Someone like Jim Wallis steps in and holds people accountable. His perspective is: be free to believe what you want to believe, but if you call yourself a Christian, you cannot be pro war and pro death penalty. And you cannot support tax cuts for the wealthy, and instead take money from the poor.

It's been a delight to talk to you. Thank you for taking a few minutes to chat.

It's been my pleasure. Thank you.



Dave Quiggle

A FOREST FULL OF EVERGREENS



Dave Quiggle has what a successful artist needs – style. He's got lots of it. Anyone can look at any of his creations and immediately tie it to his name. His tattoo-art vibe comes along at a perfect time, when it's estimated that 16% of American adults have tattoos (40,000,000+)! We were blessed to have some of our best t-shirt designs ever bear his work. His former band was laid down, but he found a new outlet with Jesus Wept. Shortly thereafter he was offered a new job, a new home on the West Coast and a new reunited band to join – No Innocent Victim. We thought we'd take a break with Dave and talk to him about his art.

Why is art important to you? And why are standards of excellence important?

For me personally, art is important because it gives me an outlet to communicate ideas or feelings that I can't put into words. People ask me to explain the meanings behind a lot of my work quite often. My feeling on that is if I could have put it into words I would have been a writer or poet. One interesting facet of art is that it should be able to become a catalyst that sparks something within the viewer. On many occasions and with many pieces, I really want the viewer to draw his or her own conclusion or to have their own perceptions. That makes the viewer part of the whole experience. I think that if I were to spell everything out, it may rob someone of that. That being said, I don't mind talking about my art with someone. I just want to say as little as possible and let the other person do

most of the talking. It's like being a therapist. I just say 'interesting' and scribble something down on a notepad. Of course that only goes for my less commercial work. If you'd ask me what a heart with wings means on a t-shirt, I'd probably say "hearts and wings are pretty...people like pretty."

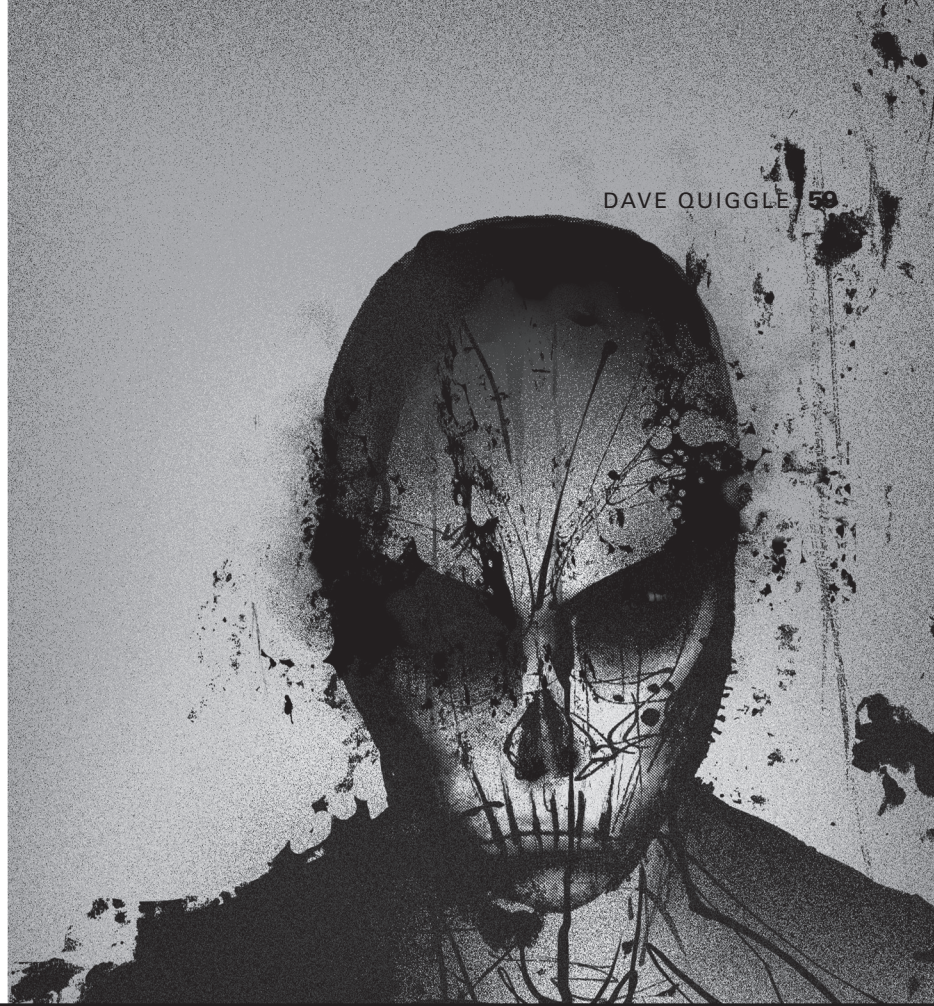
What led to your particular style? Some might label it as "tattoo style art." Would you agree? Disagree? Please elaborate?

The subject of style is really a difficult idea for me to grasp. Most of it is very intuitive. I don't really consciously strive towards keeping within a style and in fact, have difficulty seeing that I even have a style. I personally feel inconsistent and scatterbrained in my approach. Others say that it's instantly recognizable. Which is a good thing, but then makes me feel a little paranoid. I start wondering, since I don't know what my style is, can I accidentally ruin it? I'm not sure I would recognize it if I stepped on it. American traditional tattooing has had a big influence on me. It's an area that I have fun with. I'm an on-again/off-again tattoo artist, so that has really permeated much of my work. Even so, I think labeling my art as "tattoo style art" is very surface. It's like looking at a forest from the highway and seeing some evergreens and stating "that forest is full of evergreens." You wouldn't necessarily be wrong. But I'm sure there are other types of trees, plants, animals and perhaps even a small hobo village in there.

How and why does your faith enter into your artwork?

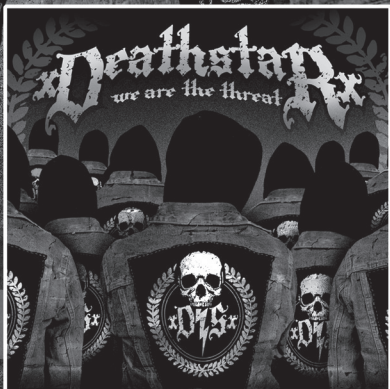
I don't have an agenda with my faith in my artwork. I hope that it reflects and shines through what I do, but I don't make a conscious effort to make my artwork any more of a ministry than my life is. I want my artwork to be what it is, like my life – imperfectly human and striving for holiness. I have to honestly say that I sometimes personally resent the Christian culture's need to sanitize and sterilize everything for its consumption. That absolves the viewer/consumer of thought and personal decision making. It's lazy. I highly value the sincere expression of humanity – whether by visual arts, music or literature – over trying to "keep it safe" for a perceived audience. I think truth, warts and all, weighs far more emotionally than idealism. When I feel that joyous, incomparable love of the Almighty God I want to express that. When I feel dark, soured and disillusioned, I want to express that, too. Faith in Christ is an integral part of who I am as a person and I would have to make much effort to conceal that in my artwork. At the same time, I'm not going to keep things one dimensional when the human experience is much more complex than seeing it from one point of view. It should be only natural for one to see all of my highs and my lows.





DAVE QUIGGLE 50





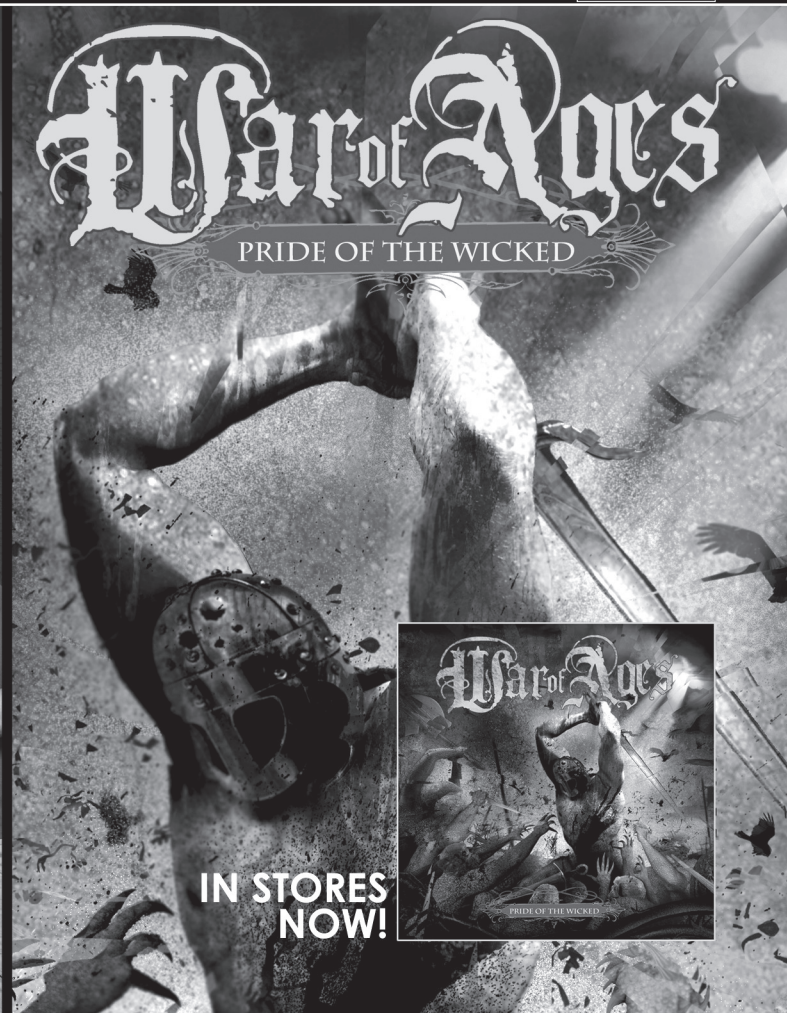
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Album reviews

61 ALBUMS 68 ENTERTAINMENT 69 BOOKS & GEAR



Rating system

- 05 CLASSIC
- 04 FABULOUS
- 03 SOLID
- 02 SUSPECT
- 01 AMISS
- * 1/2

THE SHOWDOWN *TEMPTATION COME MY WAY*

Ever since exploding onto the scene in late 2004, *The Showdown* has brought a breath of fresh air to the metal scene with an unflinching debut album, *A Chorus of Obliteration*. It was ruthless, epic, and catapulted *The Showdown* into the spotlight, giving them credibility in an over-saturated metal market. Unfortunately, the unwavering dedication to metal that made the band so great seems to have been abandoned for a more radio-friendly, Southern rock vibe on their sophomore effort, *Temptation Come My Way*.

The Tennessee natives' second record is noticeably slower tempo-wise; and whereas their first record launched into epic songs with in-your-face vocals, *Temptation Come My Way* kicks off with "Fanatics and Whores," a track that seems to have taken a cue more from the radio-rock genre than metal. And – aptly enough – the next track, "We Die Young," is also the title of an Alice in Chains song; the guitar work and singing definitely reflect the 90s-era rock, Guns 'n' Roses-era metal: louder-than-normal, but easy enough to stomach for a general listening public. The trend continues throughout the entire record; there isn't even a scream on the record until the end of the fourth track.

The Showdown hasn't forsaken the lost art of the guitar solo – a nice touch in a pop-driven music world. But it seems more like this record was written to get a song on the radio, whereas their debut effort, *A Chorus of Obliteration*, was more of an unbridled display of their talent and unwavering dedication to metal. *The Showdown* go to obvious lengths to even seem more Southern rock, writing songs about whiskey, swamps, writing with a Southern lexicon, and throwing in some cowbell. The fans that admired the technical proficiency of the band but couldn't take on the screaming can now relax a little and enjoy the songs that are almost sing-along-able.



Temptation Come My Way is going to be accepted by the public, there's no doubt about that. The general trend in music is shifting towards a rock sound; unfortunately, the sound that placed *The Showdown* above the rest of the metal-world is the casualty.

[MONO VS. STEREO] DAVID STAGG



SWITCHFOOT

OH! GRAVITY

Somehow, great songwriters have a way of making me think jealous thoughts: 'I wish I would've written that!' For nearly a decade, Jon Foreman has consistently been fantastic at cleverly crafting words around common experiences that resonate within. Case in point: in "Amateur Lovers," he laments "We don't know what we're doing" and follows it with a fearless declaration of: "Let's do it again!" Coming to grips with our shortcomings, but enjoying them nonetheless is a great modern day proverb in my book. In "Faust, Midas, and Myself," he delivers another zinger of a slogan (kinda like "We were meant to live for so much more...") when he repeats: "You have one life, one life / One life left to lead." As a poet of our times, he's certainly a worthy voice to hear. The five-piece band provides a stellar and solid musical bed throughout that brings the band's familiar sound to the forefront. Still, it sounds like *Oh! Gravity* is the record the band wanted to make, period. With a seeming devil-may-care attitude, they crank out a delta blues foundation that carries the song "Dirty Second Hands" with a Stones-like swagger, complete with minimal "who-hoo's" from the backup singers. While a megahit may or may not be found here to precipitate hitting that repeat button after any one song, it's certainly a good listen from start to finish ... and start again.

[SPARROW/COLUMBIA] DOUG VAN PELT



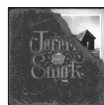
COPELAND

EAT, SLEEP, REPEAT

Copeland have successfully crafted light, fragile, yet three-dimensional emotions on their latest. These songs excel in beauty and texture, perhaps even eclipsing the depth of their previous effort, 2005's *In Motion*. This is traditional 4-piece indie/emo with a touch of added instrumentation via piano and programming. If you like it frail, moving, and heartfelt, this is for you. Though not commercial enough to compete with the Death-Cabs of the universe, there are many memorable moments on *Eat, Sleep, Repeat*, the greatest of which is the grandiose "Love is a Fast Song," where the band hints at heavier moments more than ever before. Lifted and uplifted by the wailing falsetto of vocalist Aaron Marsh, he sings, "You don't have to be ashamed because you're a miracle through and through." Though rarely breathtaking, there are glints of shimmering brilliance on this release. The band shifts gears well between more lighthearted tracks and those with greater weight. Each song is listenable and vulnerable, though perhaps predictably so.

The thing that is the most promising about the band as a whole is that they seem to desire to illuminate the present emo-glut to the lush landscapes of a different time...one in which emo pioneers like Sunny Day Real Estate and Elliot made music that not only moved you to don Jack Parcel's and v-necks, but led your imagination to worlds unknown via sonic interstellar transport. This release will take you somewhere grand, they just lack the fuel to make it further than we've been before.

[THE MILITIA GROUP] ANDREW SCHWAB



JEREMY ENIGK

WORLD WAITS

With Sunny Day Real Estate, Jeremy Enigk can take the blame/blessing for being a grandparent of emo. On his own, he has eschewed much of the e-word's traits for defter, more impressionistic travels into psyche and spirit. Where his first solo outing was a fanciful concept album speaking obliquely of his then-new Christianity, *World Waits* sounds more autobiographical. If that's the case, Enigk's been in a ruminative mood, at turns wistful, dark, reflective, slightly desperate, but with an anchor of assurance. Enigk is just enigmatic enough to keep his singer-songwriter pop fetching to the uninitiated and long-time followers. That it sounds like he's been listening to Scott Walker and Roger Waters' Pink Floyd serves his, ah, emotions; and the music supporting ably, too. Not another 7 years before another solo album now, okay, Jeremy?

[LEWIS HOLLOW] JAMIE LEE RAKE



DAVID BAZAN

FEWER MOVING PARTS EP

Having shed any band auspice for his songwriting, David Bazan sings heretofore rare first-person narratives on *Fewer Moving Parts*. De facto titular track "Fewer Broken Pieces (Cake And Eat It, Too)" gives ironically bemused rationale and friends' reactions to his disbanding Pedro The Lion. "Selling Advertising (Making It, Faking It, Breaking It)" sounds to be a resigned response to his involvement in evangelighetto subculture. Bazan practices his gift for character study on a couple other tracks, but he falters on "Backwoods Nation." Nuance is abandoned with a nigh Jello Biafran attack on the architects of and pawns in the current war on terror. Recalling his electronic experimentation with Headphones, the first versions of the songs come spiked with synths; alternate versions with mere acoustic guitar accompaniment follow. Cuss alert level: orange-ish.

[INDIE] JAMIE LEE RAKE



MXPX

LET IT HAPPEN

Though most re-releases are reserved for the most diehard of followers, this one is more than just a clever marketing ploy. This classic 1998 release from one of the most faithful, hardworking, and enduring of the punk genre features three brand new tracks to enjoy. Proving

that they have not lost a step, a beat, or even an inch, Mike, Tom, and Yuri remind us that they are not only great songwriters, but that they continue to reinvent themselves successfully, if only subtly. All three new tracks make this record worth owning (again). The Bad Religion-esque "Role Modeling" is in-cite-ful, defiant, and as poppy as they come, though not necessarily for the kiddies, per se. "Prozac" is fast-moving and love-crazy, as Hererra sings, "Who needs Prozac when I've got you?" And "Your Turn" showcases the band doing what they do best: drive melodies into your brain that won't leave even when you try to force them out. The production quality on the new tracks leaves some discrepancy between the ones of the previous version of the album, as the final masters are brighter, cleaner, and heavier. Perhaps the most notable asterisk of this re-release is the reuniting of MxPx with their first label, Tooth and Nail, which was the home of their most successful LPs in the early part of their career.

[TOOTH & NAIL] ANDREW SCHWAB

Ratings

	DV	Writer
The Showdown <i>Temptation Come My Way</i>	03*	03
Switchfoot <i>Oh! Gravity</i>	03*	
Copeland <i>Eat, Sleep, Repeat</i>	03	03
Jeremy Enigk <i>World Waits</i>	04	04
David Bazan <i>Fewer Moving Parts EP</i>	02*	03
MxPx <i>Let It Happen</i>	03*	03
He Is Legend <i>Suck Out The Poison</i>	03	
Dustin Kensrue <i>Please Come Home</i>	04	
Olivia <i>Back To Friends Where Summer Never Ends</i>	03	
Avery Pkwy <i>You Have The Roadmap</i>	03	02*
...Of Sinking Ships <i>S/T</i>	04	
Man Of Sorrows <i>S/T</i>	03	02*
I Am Ghost <i>Lover's Requiem</i>	03	
The Miracle Of You <i>Sound And Shape</i>	02*	
Radial Angel <i>Waiting On Love</i>	02*	02*
Maria McKee <i>Acoustic Tour 2006</i>	02*	03



HE IS LEGEND

SUCK OUT THE POISON

It takes a lot of Huevos Rancheros to write a concept album based around harlots and witches and truck drivers and pedophiles and sex and murder. And, if you're going to pick a style of music to put it to, you probably couldn't pick a better one than the dirty, Southern, raw rock that He Is Legend dialed in (perhaps after being blown away by a Maylene & the Sons of Disaster show, but I doubt that). This shouldn't be too much of a shock when you look at the band's Solid State debut, *I Am Hollywood*, which took a similar hard rock stab at the epic and classic discussion of man's deadly sins. While the band has generated more than its share of controversy and attention as of late, they're certainly artists that deliver more than is visible from the surface. Musically, they deliver a sweeping, dynamic offering that fits nicely somewhere between the aforementioned Maylene and Demon Hunter (in fact, "Mushroom River" could be a nice intro into "Undying").

[SOLID STATE] DOUG VAN PELT



DUSTIN KENS RUE

PLEASE COME HOME

No one who's heard Thrice live should have any doubts that this solo album by its frontman would be anything but excellent. What's striking is how brazen his tunes are framed in acoustic and steel guitars, harmonica, percussion brushes, and an old-time blues/alt-country shuffle. Much like his new-found confidence in expressing his faith openly in song, his music lays bare out in the open, without any electronic wizardry to cover up any flaws. I'll take this over just about anything the music industry manufactures. This is real. In fact, "Pistol" is about as sweet a love song as I've heard all year.

[EQUAL VISION] DOUG VAN PELT



OLIVIA

BACK TO FRIENDS

WHERE SUMMER NEVER ENDS

What hath Green Day and MxPx wrought? The pop punk phenomenon has brought cheer and bright guitar sounds into a sonic neighborhood once only occupied by minor chords and nastiness. Bands like Hawk Nelson have taken this formula to the bank, earning spots in Disney movies and legions of underage fans. With hooks as big as Hollywood, Olivia can be uttered in the same breath. Commercial appeal aside, it's hard not to sing-along to choruses like "Can you see that it's not yesterday / can you see that it's today" ("Letters In White Lines") and the Offspring-ish verses in "Are You Out There?" The fun times from bands like Dogwood can be felt here strongly; and similar edification is offered in positive affirmation, like the lines "Feelings let us know we're alive" (from the appropriately-titled "Feelings"). Don't let the fact that the weakest song ("Something Greater") is the lead-off track on this 6-song EP keep you from drinking their stuff up.

[INDIE] DOUG VAN PELT

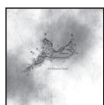


AVERY PKWY

YOU HAVE THE ROADMAP

When San Diego native Joel Piper isn't drumming for the band Olivia, he's creating songs under the moniker Avery Pkwy (the name comes from the 5 freeway exit leading to his church). The songs recorded for his debut, *You Have The Roadmap*, are typically conjured with an acoustic guitar, strings, piano, and Piper's moving falsetto. And while this collaboration manages to occasionally conjure a heavenly warm ambience, the tracks overdue longevity and lack of dynamics turn them into to a lingering amateur practice.

[INDIE VISION MUSIC] DAN FRAZIER



...OF SINKING SHIPS

S/T

While listening to this relaxing instrumental album by Chad Waldrup (from the movie *Friday Night Lights* era), I cannot help but recall those hollow, chiming guitars from the movie *Friday Night Lights*, where the viewer is surveying the aftermath of a season of high school football in Texas. The tones would fit well in with any genuine Southern blues outfit, but they're also of the atmospheric variety that any number of emo bands – from as early as Mineral to as late as current hybrids like Hundred Year Storm. It's beautiful, tender, and refreshing.

[GILEAD] DOUG VAN PELT



MAN OF SORROWS

S/T

Man Of Sorrows attempts to establish themselves apart in the blurry metal scene by incorporating Spanglish lyrics and a Latin hand percussionist. An unique angle, but not nearly enough to make a strong enough impact on their mediocre songs. The tracks borderline between hard rock and hardcore aggression, but instead of relishing on the latter and diving head first into an appropriate breakdown, they strike out with a benign guitar solo or overdone croon.

[HAIRBALL EIGHT] DAN FRAZIER



I AM GHOST

LOVERS' REQUIEM

Beginning with a Latin chant with deep, gothic organs, this vampire loving band aims straight for the heart before they dive into their Matchbook Romance / Thursday gang crooning in "Our Friend Lazarus Sleeps." Never before have I found myself bopping up and down, thrusting my fists in the air and singing about angels, gods, poison, and killing. This Long Beach, California band revels in the gothic-drenched fun of acts like The Deadlines and Blaster The Rocket Man. The dramatic lyrical tale culminates in the second-to-last song, "This Is Home." The band calls its music "epicore" and they reveal that they figured out the album's entire plot on a storyboard before they crafted a single song. According to the band, "it's essentially a rock opera, but for hardcore or goth kids." Uh oh!

I see a movie coming on ... but this cinematic effect is just what the band was probably looking for when they created *Lover's Requiem*. Look for the swords and long-sleeved ruffled shirts at your local Hot Topic soon.

[EPITAPH] DOUG VAN PELT



THE MIRACLE OF YOU

SOUND AND SHAPE

This band seems to wear its emotional and sensitive heart on its sleeve, as they begin *Sound And Shape* with the stirring pre-game speech that Billy Bob Thornton delivered in the locker room just prior to the State Championship game in the movie *Friday Night Lights*. With images of "looking your brother in the eye" and "doing everything you can," it sets you up to storm the gates and go to battle. However, the band never seems to deliver the explosion that true heavy metal domination requires, always stirring below the surface with shouts but not screams, powerchords but not riffs. Remember that self-titled Stavesacre album that just didn't really take you "there?" This album leaves that same kind of disappointing feeling. It's solid. It doesn't suck, but I was prepared and hoping for so much more. I like it, but I'm not smitten.

[HOTFOOT] DOUG VAN PELT



RADIAL ANGEL

WAITING ON LOVE

This five-piece rock act from Oklahoma City lays out power hooks, acoustic guitars, and a loud soulful croon. But by the time they hit the chorus on all of their songs, they've already managed to apply every cursed cliché from the post-Grunge wannabes of the late '90s. And their most profound offensive is placing the superb IDM title track as the album's intro and never touching in that direction again – what a tease! Lose the faux-flannel and plug back in that laptop.

[INDIE] DAN FRAZIER

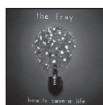


MARIA MCKEE

ACOUSTIC TOUR 2006

Maria McKee appropriately opens her *Acoustic Tour 2006* CD with the traditional "This World Is Not My Home." This woman knows a thing or two about artistic homelessness. An original cowpunkette with Lone Justice, McKee has also resided in Suffragette City glam and faux Broadway drama, and occasionally revisits roots rock folks back home. McKee accompanies herself on acoustic guitar and piano and is aided by Susan Otten's vocal help. Less is always better with McKee and instrumental accompaniment. She revives Lone Justice memories with "Shelter" and the teary "Don't Toss Us Away," while strolling along *The Great White Way* for "High Dive." Sadly, *You Gotta Sin to Get Saved*, McKee's 1993 hillbilly revival meeting, is unrepresented. Maria McKee may not have a permanent stylistic residence – it is doubtful she sincerely wants one. But who cares? It is an adventurous joy to follow her wherever she goes.

[COOKING VINYL] DAN MACINTOSH



THE FRAY

HOW TO SAVE A LIFE

The Denver and Boulder, Colorado music scenes are known for the creative, often off-kilter musical output of their participants. Big Head Todd and the Monsters, 16 Horsepower, Steve Taylor and the Samples all lay claim to the fertile ground around the Mile-High City. The Fray has sprouted their roots in the same lush musical area, but have chosen a path that is anything but off-kilter. Instead, the quartet has crafted a collection of near-perfect radio rock tunes with the inherent sweetness, accessibility and polish that make record company chairmen smile, light up a big fat stogie and smoke away. The album has been on Billboard's top 40 album sales list for a large chunk of time. The music-buying public seems to have tasted and fallen in love with these guys' 21st century arena rock: a strong piano presence, guitars that blend in and provide the right amount of edge and distortion, a straight-ahead rhythm section and tunes sung with an ear-catching degree of passion. Hopefully, the record-buying public will continue to dig into their pockets and shell out cash for future albums by these guys. There's nothing worse than the day the flame in the record company chairman's cigar goes out and the smile disappears from his face. **[EPIC] CHRIS CALLAWAY**



PHIL KEAGGY

DREAM AGAIN

Sometimes aging believers experience faith fatigue, and Phil Keaggy fesses up to it on "Revive Me" from his new release. "These heartfelt feelings of love for You / The songs, they don't come as easy now / The words don't flow now the way they did / When I was just twenty-two." It did not come easy, but *Dream Again* is an honest and rewarding new Keaggy offering. Keaggy is most famous for his fleet-fingered fret work, but guitar pyrotechnics take a back seat to personal and observational lyrics this time. He gets intimate with "Kathy," a song to his sister, then socio-political during "Why," where he asks: "W.H.Y. Why don't we / Lift our brother in humanity." *Dream Again* was surely birthed from a creative surge, as no two tracks sound alike. "Why" finds Keaggy nearly rapping its vocal. Then he Dylan-izes "Redemption" and almost whispers "Revive Me." For Keaggy fans, *Dream Again* is a dream come true. **[STROBIE] DAN MACINTOSH**



ADIE

DON'T WAIT

Adie is what good pure pop is made of: a naturally talented red head who showcases inspiring words over upbeat soft songs. Yes, she is married to Jeremy Camp and a proud mother of two, but the former lead singer of The Benjamin Gate is denying domestication and keeping her nose ring in by releasing her first solo album *Don't Wait*. While the tunes may have limited lyrical content (praise, praise, and more praise), Adie keeps your ears perpetually perked by effortlessly carrying her voice from a perfect angel pitch to

energetic pumps that instantly catch ("When It's Over") or soothe ("What Have I Done"). And nevertheless if you accept Adie as your new enduring friend or a guilty pleasure, just so you know, you're definitely not alone. **[BEG] DAN FRAZIER**



CUT THE RED WIRE

BE STILL OH CHILD OF EARTH...

Christian pop music can at times falter by sounding almost too heavenly and angelic. In an attempt to achieve maximum gracefulness and pristine clarity through song, the emotion, intensity, and inherent transcendent quality of the aesthetic experience can be hampered by excessive studio perfection and over-production. Such is not the case with Cut the Red Wire, which is literally one man, Andrew Bird (no, not that Andrew Bird or his Mysterious Production of Eggs), writing, programming, performing, and recording music that speaks to his soul. *Be Still Oh Child of Earth, All Heaven is in Your Hands* doesn't attempt to hide its various imperfections or lo-fidelity. Rather, the songs seem to plainly declare, "Here I am Lord. This is all that I am and this is all for you." Musically, the synth and drum machine combination lands somewhere between David Bazan's Headphones and Ben Gibbard's Postal Service; it sounds like it should probably be danced to, but it's doubtful anyone will. The songs here, especially the layered instrumental opener, "This Time It's Real" and "The Time Between the Days and the Nights" work around the beats, with Bird's quivering vocals eased subtly into the mix. "Be Still," a collage of found sound and atmospherics, is both more challenging and rewarding for the listener, and promises a bright future for this virtuosic virtuoso. **[PLASTIC MUSIC] AUSTIN POWELL**



OUR CORPSE DESTROYED

AVENGE YOUR CITY

Our Corpse Destroyed spit out nostalgic fast-paced street punk that is slowing dying away. But don't tell this San Antonio five-piece that (not that they would care either way), because with the ten abrasive tracks on their new album, *Avenge Your City*, the circle pit is alive and well with every gang vocal beat. And with a tattooed pastor as their guitarist, a uniquely well-meaning message is guaranteed. Pump your first and snarl! **[HAIRBALL EIGHT] DAN FRAZIER**



JONNY LANG

TURN AROUND

Jonny Lang is a white blues vocalist/guitarist from Fargo, North Dakota. You betcha! He proves that even heavily-accented Midwesterners can also perform the blues. Lang's Christ-centered songs separate this latest CD from his previous more "secular" works. The performer's sincerity, and distinct lack of Bible-thumping, makes it a fine first-faith release. Sonically, it is as much a throwback to electrified gospel, as it is to the blues. There is plenty of church-y organ work, which is never a bad thing. Lang's singing is gritty and soulful, much

like prime Stevie Wonder vocalizing, and this is also a highly positive aural trait. Lang is not trying to convert the masses with these songs; salvation only happens when individuals turn to Christ one person at a time, as one particular song simply explains the gospel. As artistic directions go, "Turn Around" is a career turn for the best. **[A&M] DAN MACINTOSH**



MUTE MATH

S/T

When Mute Math self-released this CD on their own while their label and lawyer wrestled over a lawsuit about being marketed into the CBA market, only true fans picked it up. Building on its terrific *Reset* EP, this official "debut" album showed the band stretching its own boundaries a little bit, and settling into whatever they were defining as "their" sound. For example, "Typical" finds a happy medium between the beautiful melody of "Control" and the pop hooks of "Peculiar People." Now that the lawsuit is settled, the world can get a well-rounded picture of this great band (with 3 bonus songs from *Reset*). And the fan gets a bonus 6-song live disc that captures well the MM magic. **[WARNER BROS.] DOUG VAN PELT**

Ratings

	DV	Writer
The Fray <i>How to Save a Life</i>	04	04
Phil Keaggy <i>Dream Again</i>	03	03
Adie <i>Don't Wait</i>	02*	04
Cut The Red Wire <i>Be Still Oh Child Of Earth...</i>	03	03
Our Corpse Destroyed <i>Avenge Your City</i>	03	03
Jonny Lang <i>Turn Around</i>	02*	03
Mute Math <i>S/T</i>	05	
DC Talk <i>Jesus Freak 10th Anniversary Special Edition</i>	03*	05
Falling Up <i>Exit Lights</i>	03	02*
Johnny Cash <i>At San Quentin</i>	03	
Demon Hunter <i>The Triptych Special Edition</i>	04	04
Delirious? <i>Now Is the Time: Live At Willow Creek</i>	03	03
Greeley Estates <i>Far From Lies</i>	03	04
Leigh Nash <i>Wishing For This</i>	04	03*

DC TALK

JESUS FREAK 10TH ANNIVERSARY S.E.

1995's Jesus Freak forced many to take dc Talk seriously. Instead of another unconvincing hip hop album, containing parody fodder like "I Luv Rap Music," which The Swirling Eddies later lampooned, this disc revealed a new and improved rock trio. Granted, dc Talk never matured into the legitimate hard rock band the title track suggested. But along with displaying dc Talk's robust musical evolution, Jesus Freak showcased relevant lyrics, including frank talk about racism ("Colored People") and equally honest faith lessons, exemplified by "What If I Stumble" and "So Help Me God." A bonus disc includes the wonderfully funky Gottee Bros. remix for "Jesus Freak," and live covers of Larry Norman's "I Wish We'd All Been Ready" and R.E.M.'s "It's the End of the World as We Know It (And I Feel Fine)." What a joy to experience DC Talk's freak flag flying again! [GOTTEE] DAN MACINTOSH

FALLING UP

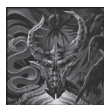
EXIT LIGHTS

The art of a good remix album is tricky. How does a band recreate past material without simply recycling it, being faithful to the original while making something new? Falling Up undertakes this challenge with *Exit Lights*. The album revisits songs from *Crashings* and *Dawn Escapes*, with guest vocals from Rachel Lampa and Solomon Olds of Family Force 5. It is interesting to hear different elements of past songs recombined to create a new experience. However, Olds' cameo on "Moonlit" comes off as dated by a few years. The overall sound stays close enough to the original that loyal fans will recognize their favorites and enjoy the new twists. The sonic landscape is a little flat here though, with most of the songs occupying the same general territory. This effort may not win over new fans on its own, but it's worth checking for those who already are in the fold. [BEC] TIM HALLILA

JOHNNY CASH

AT SAN QUENTIN

Note to boxset project directors: When choosing between "best foot forward" and "excess," go with excess every time! This best-selling follow-up to the *Folsom Prison* live album is loaded up with extras: 31 songs, a DVD documentary, and one fine booklet filled with liner notes that feature both written and photographic historical perspective, the story behind that finger photo, the tension of the moment, the success of the album, and more. [COLUMBIA/LEGACY] DOUG VAN PELT



DEMON HUNTER

THE TRIPTYCH: SPECIAL EDITION

Frankly, I'm tired of these "Special Edition" releases that are the latest record industry ploy. Re-releasing an album that came out within the last year, giving it some new artwork, slapping a few sub par bonus tracks on the end, and maybe giving us a DVD with some stuff that not many people care about. It's a way to cash in on the true fans who've just got to have everything a band releases, regardless if they purchased the original version of the album a mere 12 months ago. It feels sleazy.

But every once in a while, the aforementioned album comes so packed full of extras, that not only is it worth the money, but it's also a real treat for those not privy to the release prior. That's where Demon Hunter's *The Triptych: Special Edition* comes in. We get four bonus tracks: three acoustic and one remix of "Undying" by Aaron Sprinkle. The remix is one of the best and heaviest industrial type remixes you're likely to hear. It would have been cool to hear some of the band's heavier tracks translated acoustically rather than the three ballads we get here ("My Throat Is An Open Grave," "My Heartstrings Come Undone," and "The Tide Began To Rise"); heavy tracks laid bare that way show whether a song is truly great or merely heavy.

On the DVD we get lots of goodies. There's the previously released (but rarely seen) *Waging the Third War* footage from the making of *The Triptych*, on the road scenes from the band's recent tour, a professionally shot live show in its entirety from Pomona, California's Glasshouse, all of the band's music videos to date, and lots of photos. You can tell Demon Hunter relishes being on the road since they only tour once per album cycle, and it makes the entire experience more meaningful for the band and fans alike. With the live show, it's great how raw and live the concert is, but the melodic vocals are weak and off-key most of the time.

As mentioned, this is definitely worth your time and funds. I never thought I'd say that about a "Special Edition" album, but Demon Hunter has made it worth your while. [SOLID STATE] CHAD OLSON

DELIRIOUS?

NOW IS THE TIME: LIVE AT WILLOW CREEK

Worship music has devolved into Christian karaoke, with a billion different artists seemingly performing the same few songs over and over again. Getting to "The Heart of Worship" is admirable, but so is creativity, people! In contrast, Delirious? consistently colors outside the jukebox, and this new live CD/DVD highlights what makes the veteran group special. *Now Is The Time: Live At Willow Creek, Chicago U.S.A.* opens with "Here I Am Send Me," a call to action, rather than just another 'bless me Lord' plea. Newer songs also fair well, including "Rain Down," accompanied visually by video screen raindrops, and the contemplative "Majesty (Here I Am)." Praise music was never intended to be absentminded repetition of overly familiar lyrics and melodies. But it is headed that way. Delirious? rocks

against the grain with its ever-fresh approach to making music. That is worth getting delirious about.

[FURIOUS?] DAN MACINTOSH



GREELEY ESTATES

FAR FROM LIES

By never letting the desert dust settle on them, Phoenix natives Greeley Estates are bouncing back with their second album *Far From Lies*. Many miles of driving and numerous nights of barely sleeping due to an intense tour schedule have hardened and matured this screamo five piece into an ensemble well worth watching. Less breakdowns and scrapping screams have given way for more room to showcase vocalist Ryan Zimmerman's once-hidden croon and guitarist/songwriter Dallas Smith's superbly developed melodies. But just remember to always be wary of your stance, because just when you feel safe, the Greeleys will unsuspectingly strike down fast and hard. [RECORD COLLECTION] DAN FRAZIER



LEIGH NASH

WISHING FOR THIS

Hot on the heels of her solo debut, *Blue on Blue*, comes a new Christmas EP from former Sixpence None the Richer vocalist Leigh Nash, and a welcome stocking stuffer it is indeed.

The seven-song disc compiles a wide range of covers along with a traditional carol ("O Holy Night") and one original. A lot of stylistic turf is covered in just seven songs; from the jazzy standard "Baby It's Cold Outside," (a duet with up and comer Gabe Dixon,) to the greatly improved sugar-plum pop Wham classic "Last Christmas," the artsy pop of Ron Sexsmith's "Maybe This Christmas" and Dolly Parton's classic "Hard Candy Christmas." This is obviously a collection of songs Nash loves, completely devoid of any unifying theme other than "Christmas" and her sublime voice.

Without a doubt the artistic high-water mark comes with the last two tracks; "Eternal Gifts" written by Nashville indie artist Kate York and Nash's own composition "Wishing for This." The latter, a beautiful ballad that delivers a classic melody laid gently atop a lush but simple piano and cello track, is the kind of song that, while referencing Christmas throughout, is really appropriate year round. "Eternal Gifts" would be a strong contender for Christmas Song of the Year if such an award existed. Perfect pedal steel guitar and a wonderfully roomy recording style make it one of Nash's career standouts and will have some hoping for a full-on country album from her down the road.

Though fun, "Baby It's Cold Outside" suffers mildly from somewhat canned sounding string / horn samples (not that anyone cares in a song like this,) but really the first five tracks are warm-ups for the final two, which will be favorites for years to come. Here's hoping she does a Valentine's Day EP too. [ONE SON] JOHN J. THOMPSON



THE AWAKENING

RAZOR BURN

Ashton Nyte is one prolific songwriter that knows how to capitalize on the strength of his strong, low vocals, marrying a gothic, doomy sound with danceable grooves and a tad of techno additives as spice. It's a very original sound, but not too far away from the sound of HIM. *Razor Burn* finds the band in top form, rocking with a swagger through 11 excellent songs. I'd love to see how bringing in an outside producer would draw out even more from this band.

[YOUNGSIDE] DOUG VAN PELT

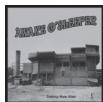


IONA

THE CIRCLING HOUR

Not content to just tickle the Enya itch, these Celtic prog rockers seem to push themselves to explore much ground in the sonic landscape – from thunderous low end symphonic rumbles to metallic guitar noodling and multi-instrumental jamming (with organs, piano, strings, whistles and all types of percussion) – all mixed in a way to take the listeners' breath away. *The Circling Hour* is a great listen from beginning to end, ranking alongside the band's first four studio albums.

[OPEN SKY] DOUG VAN PELT



DESTROY NATE ALLEN

AWAKE O'SLEEPER

Throw a writer in front of a microphone and a crowd with nothing but an acoustic guitar to hide behind and they may as well be naked. Their words are the only thing they've got. You're gonna get the truth and – much of the time – nothing but the truth. Nate, who pens some great articles (Danielson, #119) and reviews in HM, sings with a simple bluntness and innocence that screams as loud as punk. Aptly titled, *Destroy Nate Allen* takes songs that could work in a full band context and deconstructs them. Like Guthrie, it ain't pretty, but it is compelling.

[QUIVER SOCIETY] KERN COUNTY KID, THE



MXPX

LET'S ROCK

If I read the liner notes first, I feel let down; like I'm eating the leftovers from a forgotten meal. But if I just close my eyes and listen, I hear one uptempo rock sing-along after another; and I'm happy. With joyous romping sounds, even a political song like "1 and 3" can be fun. "Make Up Your Mind" and "You Walk, I Run" are good fast classic MxPx songs; while "Don't Forget Me" and "Where Did You Go?" are melodic ballads that show off Mike Herrera's pleasant singing voice. It's the funny acoustic story about dating ("Sweet Sweet Thing") that might be the best, though. MxPx is fairly under-rated and under-appreciated for their musicianship and their songwriting. *Let's Rock* proves that these guy's trash is most band's treasure.

[SIDEONEDUMMY] DOUG VAN PELT



THE BROTHERS MARTIN

S/T

OK folks. Are there any fans of Starflyer 59 and/or Joy Electric out there? How many of you were curious and/or nervous as to why Jason & Ronnie decided to collaborate on a record? Well, let me allay those fears for you – this album is nothing like Dance House Children, nothing like it at all. In fact, this album is remarkable in that it catches these brothers in a sort of musical paradox, as it is both retro (*I Love The 80's, Volume Martin!*) and forward-looking. *The Brothers Martin* finds The Brothers Martin refusing to rest upon the work they've already done as individuals and truly distilling their musical tastes into a coherent whole. These songs aren't some mere leftover tracks from old recording sessions thrown together into some sort of watered-down bowl of Martin soup. Instead, the album is filled with tracks that reflect the Martins' love for the music of their youth and their love for making music over the past 15 years.

The Martins do a good job with not letting one brother's style overwhelm the other. They take turns singing each song, with the singer's own style rising a bit to the top in that song, meaning that Ronnie's songs have (predictably) more synth & danceable drum programming, and Jason's songs have more pronounced guitars, while maintaining a more chilled out vibe. But throughout, what is most apparent is that the brothers are at ease working, playing, and creating with each other. Granted, the drum patterns on Ronnie's songs get too predictable ("Life On Strings") and there are the songs ("Fears to Remember") when you feel as if the guys are trying a bit too hard to channel the musical mannerisms of Martin Gore, Robert Smith, & Morrissey (just not all at the same time, as that would be an overdose of melancholy). Nevertheless, this is a quality album made by two brothers whose individual capacities for making great pop songs ("Communication" & "Opportunities" are standout tracks) have been overlooked for far too long. Do I expect this family get-together to manifest into something larger than their work as Starflyer 59 & Joy Electric? Not hardly, but *The Brothers Martin* was an enjoyable break in the action from their usual musical offerings, kinda like the work they did for Jason's wife Julie on the Bon Voyage album, *The Right Amount*.

[TOOTH & NAIL] ADAM NEWTON



THE ROCKET SUMMER

THE EARLY YEARS EP

We all look weird in our high school yearbook photos. That's a fact of life. So imagine taking your yearbook picture, making thousands of copies of it, putting them into new frames and passing them around to everyone you know. That would be weird, right? Not if you're Bryce Avery. The mastermind behind The Rocket Summer is inviting you all to check out his teenage self with a new re-release of his band's self-titled EP, which he wrote and recorded between the ages of 14 and 16. This brand-spanking-new edition is called *The Early Years*, and it captures an energetic set of pop-rock that's not

too far removed from Avery's recent work. Now, true, his sense of melody wasn't as well-developed as it is now, and he's grown a lot more adventurous in his arrangements since his Clearasil days, but *The Early Years* features the roots of the anthemic pop Avery did so well on 2005's *Hello, Good Friend*. "My Typical Angel" does on guitars what much of *Friend* does on piano, and "Teenage Love Rock" sums up, both in sound and title, what you'll find here. *The Early Years* also includes "She's a Seven," a Japanese bonus track from The Rocket Summer's first album, and it fits right in. Fans of Bryce Avery's polished, stirring fist-pumpers will be fascinated by the origins of his talent, and casual fans will find in *The Early Years* six sweet little ditties that belie the age of their author. No strange haircuts or forced smiles here – this is a yearbook photo to be proud of.

[THE MILITIA GROUP] ANDRE SALLES

Ratings

	DV	Writer
The Awakening <i>Razor Burn</i>	04	
Iona <i>The Circling Hour</i>	03*	
Destroy Nate Allen <i>Awake O'Sleeper</i>	03	03*
MxPx <i>Let's Rock</i>	03*	
The Brothers Martin <i>S/T</i>	03	03*
The Rocket Summer <i>The Early Years EP</i>	02*	03



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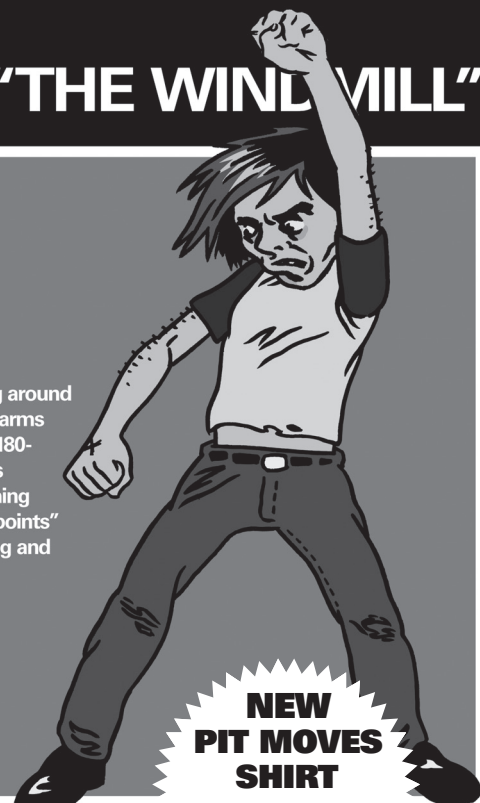
PIT MOVES: #1, "THE WINDMILL"

HM

THE HARD MUSIC MAGAZINE

Description: Either almost standing still or rotating around in the pit like a "mini twister" with fully extended arms (with a clenched fist at each end) swinging in full 180-degree rotation at as high an angle as the person's shoulder blades/rotator cuffs will allow. Approaching blurring speed is a necessity and you get "bonus points" for changing direction as well as suddenly stopping and maintaining balance.

(on a scale of 1-10)
Degree of difficulty: 6
Likelihood of injury: 10
Cardiovascular intensity: 8



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PIT MOVES
SHIRT**

@

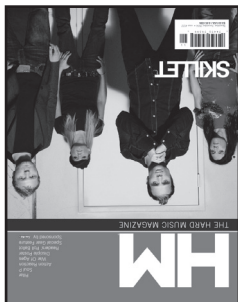
HMMAG.COM

HM BACK ISSUES: READ 'EM WHILE YOU CAN



#114
20th Anniv Issue S.E.

Payable On Death
Disciple
MxPx
Every Time I Die Says
TFK
Robert Randolph
Damien Jurado
Headphones
History of C.Rock
History of C.Metal
History of HM mag



#122
Pillar & Skillet

Special "flip" double cover
Disciple
Mastodon Says
He Is Legend
Wovenhand
Robert Randolph
Bloodlined Calligraphy
Action Reaction
War of Ages
Disciple poster
In Reverent Fear



#121
Norma Jean

mewithoutYou
Buckcherry Says
T Bone Burnett
Showbread
Leigh Nash
Glen Clark & Family
Fireflight
Pigeon John
Within
mewithoutYou poster
Stellar Kart



#110
So & So Says Special

Slipknot
Scott Stapp
Throwdown
Lamb of God
Hopesfall
In Flames
Dan Dyer
Sinai Beach
The Chariot
Symphony in Peril
Killswitch Engage

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go to our webstore at
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EXHAUSTIVE LIST OF AVAILABLE BACK ISSUES:

#077 May/Jun '99 **Pete Stewart**, Stavesacre poster, **Doug Pinnick**, Rackets & Drapes
#082 Mar/Apr '00 **PAX 217**, The Appleseed Cast, **Chevelle**, Wyrick
#088 Mar/Apr '01 **Zao**, Luti-Kriss, **The Brothers Martin** (yes!), The Alarm, FSF
#091 Sep/Oct '01 **P.O.D.**, **Dashboard Confessional**, DA, One 21, Embodiment
#094 Mar/Apr '02 **Alice Cooper**, Squad 5-0, Pedro, Craving Theo, **Beloved**
#098 Nov/Dec '02 **Blindside**, Dream Theater Says, **Embodiment**, Lost Dogs
#104 Nov/Dec '03 **The Ugly Truth Behind C. Rock**, J. Cash, BRMC, **Thursday Says**
#105 Jan/Feb '04 **P.O.D.**, Daniel Martin Diaz Poster, Kutless, Pillar, **Hatebreed Says**
#108 Jul/Aug '04 **Demon Hunter**, Antestor, **Zao**, Cool Hand Luke, Boys Night Out Says
#111 Jan/Feb '05 **Comeback Kid**, Showbread, Anberlin, **Taking Back Sunday Says**
#112 Mar/Apr '05 **Norma Jean**, Extol, Starflyer 59, **Eisley**, Far-Less, Scorpions Says
#113 May/Jun '05 **As I Lay Dying**, Still Remains, **Mae**, Copeland, **Fall Out Boy Says**
#115 Sep/Oct '05 **Blindside**, Mortal Treason, John Davis, **Project 86**, The Locust Says
#116 Nov/Dec '05 **No Innocent Victim**, Demon Hunter, **My Chemical Romance Says**
#117 Jan/Mar '06 **P.O.D.**, **Zao**, **Maylene &...**, Underoath poster, Sevendust Says
#118 Mar/Apr '06 **Thrice**, The Classic Crime, The Violet Burning, **Collective Soul Says**
#119 May/Jun '06 **Underoath**, Project 86, Danielson, **Bleeding Through Says**
#120 Jul/Aug '06 **Dead Poetic**, Emery poster, **Zao**, Madball Says, Brandtson

Entertainment reviews

DVDS, BOOKS & GEAR



01 THE OMEN FOXVIDEO

If you knew that the anti-Christ was going to be born at such a time, would you try to kill him to prevent the madness that his maturity into adulthood brings? And what if you were given a child to raise (switched at the hospital before mom could find out), what would go on in your mind as you began to suspect something unusual about your child? These are fascinating questions that this film poses.

Like all supernatural thrillers, there's plenty for the believer to take from this one – a remake of one of the all-time classics. When Christian film makers set out to put *Left Behind* to celluloid, you know the original *Omen* was one they looked at and modeled after. Mankind's fascination with evil is definitely splashed upon the screen with extra emphasis and drama. Damien's dad finds it hard to accept what is being explained to him. He fights with: "It's not real. There is no devil. There is no God. There is only here and now and life." Even this stoic changes his tune when presented with enough evidence otherwise.

The bonus material is amazing. One featurette details the mishaps ("Omenisms") that hit this project hard. It pulls the curtain back on filmmaking, offering a rare glimpse into this business. Another long documentary explores man's morbid supernatural fascination in depth. "Whatever it is that's out there, whether it's God, the devil, whatever is out there, that thing that you feel – whenever man makes art about it, you get some amazing work." Amen to that! *Doug Van Pelt*



02 AKEELAH AND THE BEE LIONSGATE

The hype on this movie is legit. It was a beautiful story of a prodigious young girl that struggles with her talent (and greatness) and learns to reach out for help. It exposes a pretty fun universe of competition, where at least 80% of the words they tackle are insanely complex. *DV*



03 LOST: SEASON 2 PARAMOUNT

The magic of the boxset once again allows the viewer to swallow as much plot and whodunnit suspense as they want in one sitting. The jumps the writers force the viewer to make between belief and doubt are intriguing, and making God and the supernatural part of the story adds to it. *DV*



04 MONTY PYTHON: 16TON MEGASET AGE HOME VIDEO

Collecting all this troupe's skits into one boxset is as fulfilling as a treasure hunt could be. The navigation between favorite skits is user-friendly and comical at the same time. The live "concert" DVDs offer almost a communal atmosphere, as the performance can give an extra nuance to the familiar. *DV*



05 THE LAKE HOUSE FOXVIDEO

This romantic tale takes the suspended disbelief jump into a magic mailbox that delivers mail back and forth from two years past to the present. Sandra Bullock and Keanu Reeves do alright, offering up a nice warm "date movie" experience. It brings up the question of regret that all of us ponder. *DV*



06 X: THE LAST STAND FOXVIDEO

This one ventured even further with the CGI extremes, but the humanity in the characters drive the story along enough to keep even the skeptic's attention. The age old story of sacrifice and love resonates in the Ralph Winter produced story (surprise, surprise), reinforcing the Gospel's imprint on our culture. *DV*



07 BLACK. WHITE. FOXVIDEO

Taking the Lord's admonition to "judge not, lest ye be judged," these writers took two families and literally had them switch skin colors (thanks to Hollywood makeup). This experiment resulted in some beautiful lessons that get uncomfortable for everyone involved, but everyone should see this. *DV*



08 THANK YOU FOR SMOKING FOXVIDEO

Almost great. This comedic drama is long in irony and only short on dry performance, caricature characters and slightly slow in story telling, but this is part of the charm in this funny "think piece." It's really an entertaining addition to the conversation society probably should be having about cigarettes. *DV*

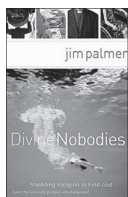
SPIRITUAL RELEVANCY (%)

OBSCENITIES

SCENES OF GORE

NUDITY / SEXUALITY

	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08
SPIRITUAL RELEVANCY (%)	100	50	90	50	50	80	100	40
OBSCENITIES	3	3	06	15	5	5	16	48
SCENES OF GORE	2			2		1		
NUDITY / SEXUALITY			1	17		1		3



Divine Nobodies

Jim Palmer – W Publishing Group

Shedding the 10-step-program-to-finding-Christ guidelines, pastor and devout sports fan Jim Palmer steps outside the thick walls of the church to find God in everyday people. In each of the 15 parable-like chapters, Palmer uses humor and brutal honesty to recount how his eyes were opened to seeing God through someone that wasn't standing behind a pulpit. A hip-hop enthusiast, an overworked Waffle House waitress, and an excommunicated homosexual Christian are just some of the people that peel back the layers of religion in Palmer's life; jarring his perceptions of what a Christian is supposed to look like. Reading much like Donald Miller's *Blue Like Jazz*, *Divine Nobodies* speaks of a life committed to God but still human and relevant, willing to re-write and challenge pre-existing rules. *Kelly Benson*



Man In White

Johnny Cash – West Bow Press

This new edition of Johnny Cash's 1986 biblical/historical novel owes its existence to the economic machine supplying the public's demand for all things Cash in the wake of the icon's 2003 death and last year's *Walk the Line* biopic. That's a good thing – capitalism has a real upside. If you'll allow me a little countrified expression, anyone hankerin' to get a real handle on Johnny's spirituality and Christian faith will do a far sight better with *Man in White* than any number of biographical or even autobiographical works. There's something about a good story that conveys truth in a special way, an oft used strategy of the book's titular figure. If you're not interested in Johnny's faith, read it for the well-researched and insightful account of Saul's transformation into Paul, one highly praised by no less than Billy Graham. If you have a previous edition of the book, don't buy this one for the lightweight afterward by Johnny's son. Instead, buy it for the fantastic-looking new cover treatment (nearly worth it for nonreaders). *Carey Womack*



01



02



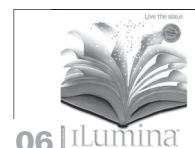
03



04



05



06

iPod accessories

Logi-Tech, Griffin, Honestech, Avantquest, & Tyndale House

(01) Logi-Tech's **AudioStation** (\$299) answer to the sexy, sleek Bose SoundDock is a good one, with a big, booming bass sound and a convenient remote with standard adjustments. It charges the iPod while playing, but tends to get 'em hot with extended playtimes. (02) L-T's **Freepulse Wireless Headphones** (\$99) are an improvement over their previous (pricier

wireless headphones, cuz the iPod attachment/transmitter is smaller, less cumbersome and connects automatically. The over-the-ear straps keep these lightweight phones secure. (03) **iBeams** (\$19) are two snap-ons – a flashlight; and a class IIIA laser pointer. Good times. (04) **VHS to DVD** (\$99) allows you to easily convert VHS or TV to dvd (as long as you've got the hard

drive space). (05) The **Ringtone Media Studio 2** (\$24) program converts CD songs/mp3s, etc to ringtones. No joke! (06) **iLumina** (\$89) is a Bible and study aid for your computer, packing tons of helps (like 10,000 study notes, 35 animations, charts, timelines, etc) into a program that can be run off discs or entirely loaded on the hard drive. Nice 'n' handy, for sure. *DV*

The Christian & Art

WITH KEMPER CRABB

The Disconnect: Why Evangelicals Make Bad Art (Part the Third)

In this last issue, we continued to explore the question of why, in an America in which between one-fourth and one-fifth of the population reportedly profess to be Evangelicals, there is such a paucity of quality art created by Christians (in music, dance, television, film, etc.). We saw that, though Evangelicals claim to know and love the Creator of all beauty, and to be directed in “every good work” (2 Timothy 3: 16-17), their communal failure to produce quality art for the Church and the world is a result of their lack of knowledge and understanding of the Bible. Two reasons were advanced for this lack of knowledge: laziness and bad theology, the first of which we saw as primarily related to a self-idolatry, which manifests itself in a pursuit of pleasure (personal peace and affluence), which has displaced love for and service to God’s Will and Purposes. We will now commence an examination of the contributions of flawed theology to the artistic irrelevance of today’s Evangelical Church to our culture.

Every theological approach (like every ideology or system of thought) is governed by its presuppositions (or axioms). Its assumed primary concerns. In the case of Evangelical theology, it is to be desired that the presuppositions underlying it be drawn from Scripture, which tells us how to direct our paths and our works (Psalm 119: 105; 2 Timothy 3: 16-17). This is, of course, the professed goal of all Evangelical theology. However, in practice, it all too frequently turns out that only part of Scripture’s full-spectrum range of goals for mankind is given attention to as governing theological assumptions. What do I mean by this statement? At present in Western (especially American) Evangelical thought, the primary thing assumed to be sought by Christians is an experience of God. As an initial step in a Christian’s spiritual life, no doubt, this is proper, since Evangelicals believe that a regenerating personal relationship with Christ is necessary to spiritual rebirth and the beginning of subsequent sanctification. While it is certainly a good and necessary thing to experience a sustained relationship with God, the feeling of that experience becomes all too often the goal of Christian life (which aberration has given rise to our therapeutically-obsessed culture). Again, it is good and necessary to have a consistent experience of the Christ we are living in relationship with (though the idea that this relationship will always make us feel good is a radical misunderstanding of what relationship with the Sanctifying Christ truly means...). The problem is that, if the goal of feeling good becomes primary, then other equally vital aspects of the kind of life set forth for Christians in Scripture are neglected. What I have in view here is that the Christian is to be characterized as much (or more, in my perspective) by an ethical concern. For instance, Jesus says in John 14:15, “If you love Me,

keep My Commandments,” and, in verse 21 of that chapter, “He who has My Commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him” (which seems to infer that a continued experience of Jesus is tied up in ethical obedience to Him). Our love for Jesus is to be shown by what we do (ethics), not by how we feel.

The marching orders for Evangelicals are frequently said to be found in the Great Commission’s (Matthew 28: 18-20) mandate to evangelize, yet it is not frequently noted that we are to disciple the nations to “observe all things that I have commanded you,” an ethical consideration. Ephesians 2: 8-10 tells us that “we are His Workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them,” and James 2: 17-18 simply says, “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. But someone will say, ‘You have faith, and I have works.’ Show me your faith without your works, and I will show you my faith by my works.” Obviously, living as Christians entails living obediently by the Bible’s ethical standards, and it is thus necessary to study and learn Scripture, if we are going to be able to do so. Orthopraxy (correct action) requires orthodoxy (correct belief). To do the things we are called to do by God (like being an artist), we must study the Bible to be able to understand how to do our calling (such as art) in ways which please the Lord Who has called us.

Yet, if our primary goal as Christians is to feel good about our relationship with God, then, rather than studying the Bible as a guide for our lives and callings, so that we can live obediently to please God, Bible study becomes only a “quiet time,” when we seek to have some emotional experience of God. Our attendance at church becomes primarily a quest for a feel-good experience, rather than a ministry to God (an ethical action) of praise and an opportunity to hear God speak to us through His Word and Sacraments, equipping us to please Him further by obediently performing His Will outside the walls of the church-building. Bad theology of this sort drives many from church to church seeking an emotional experience (sometimes called a “blessing” or “meeting my spiritual needs,” or any number of other spiritual-sounding euphemisms for self-fixated emotional idolatry), rather than finding a place where they are needed and can help build up Christ’s Body.

To do our callings, we must attend to God’s Word, and we must do so on His terms, not our own, with our focus on the fullness of what He wants us to take away from Scripture, not on a partial understanding which reinforces our self-centeredness and laziness. Lord willing, more on bad theology in the next issue. [kempercabb.net]

The way I see it Chris Wighaman

Want to know a secret? The guy who wrote the column to the right of this is balding. I think he has been for a while now, but I wouldn't know because for most of the time I've known him he cut his hair short.

He's wasn't the 'bic shave' kind of guy; more a 'number two attachment' kind of guy. He always pushed the short hair thing on me, but I resisted because I preferred mine the way Jesus did. The problem with that style is that at a fairly young age my hair began to, well, thin. I discovered something which my friend over here already knew, if you remove all your hair, it's hard to tell you're balding, errr, I mean thinning. Now I am a 'no attachment' kind of guy, and in the summer a 'bic guy.' I still get the bald jokes, but people always have to say, "but you do it intentionally," to which I nod my head and say, "yes ... of course, it's all intentional."

Do you have anything you're in denial of? Things that you cover up and hope to make look better than it really is? It's hard to come to grips with some of the more difficult flaws we have. That's why one of the most difficult bits of Scripture to deal with is one we all know by heart: "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" [Romans 3:23]. To our culture, this is possibly the most offensive thing said in the Bible. Everyone thinks of themselves as "good people" and "not really that bad," because "I'm not an ax murderer or something really evil." This view plagues our culture, yes even our Christian culture. The idea that we're sinners, is repulsive to so many of us that we reject the idea outright. Like so many addicts in denial we have trouble admitting that we have done wrong against God and because of that never fully experience His grace, forgiveness, and healing. How can God help if someone is in denial? He cannot.

The second half of the sentence quoted above is: "and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that freely came by Christ Jesus" [Romans 3:24]. This free gift comes with one string, you have to arrive at a place where your sinfulness is something you acknowledge to God. Letting God know that you realize your goodness is really a pile of junk next to His is the beginning of living fully and freely in God's grace.

Devotions with Greg Tucker

*"The main thing is to keep the main thing the main thing."
—The Sixties*

Having partied the semester away, an attractive college student was on the verge of failing her required history course unless something drastic happened. A week before the final exam she put on her most seductive outfit and stepped into the instructor's office, closing the door behind.

"Professor," she said, leaning forward. "I really want to pass your class and would do anything to get an A on this test."

Fully understanding her intention, the professor clarified, "You would do anything?"

"Anything," she confirmed.

He looked directly into her eyes and asked, "Would you even... study?"

Each of us is guilty of making I would do anything-type statements, when in fact, we're willing to do almost nothing to reach our stated goals. As an HM reader, you already know the Road to the Stage is littered with wanna-be musicians who choose not to rehearse, write, promote, or strategize, and it's all because they don't know what their true life values are.

Take a moment to write ten things that are important to you. One by one, make the list shorter until you end with just four items, then prioritize those. A final group might look like this: 1) my relationship with God, 2) my family, 3) spending quality time with friends, and 4) becoming financially secure.

This is your desired list of values, and no doubt it's impressive, but to see what's really important to you, put that aside and pull out your calendar and checkbook. How you spend your time and money speaks volumes about your true priorities.

Every six months I set aside one week to get alone for prayer, study, and writing. Part of my routine is self-examination, where I respond to the question, "Are my actions of the past half-year in sync with what I want my priorities to be?" Sometimes I'm encouraged, but occasionally the answer is painful. Either way, the result is an honest assessment of who I really am, weighed against who I want to be as a Christian man.

Jesus made a profound statement one day. He said, "If you'll put Me first, I'll apply My great power to everything else on your list." (Matthew 6:33 should be underlined in your Bible.) Of course, putting Him first happens with a simple decision; keeping Him there comes from dozens of right decisions you'll make throughout the day. Every day.

Life's greatest winners are those who would "do anything" to know the lordship of Jesus Christ, and then they do everything.

[Greg Tucker lives in your computer at HopeCCA.com]

PICK OF THE LITTER

Blood On The Tracks

This band from Santa Clara, CA puts out some great and lively rock. The vocals of Millhows are strong, melodic and head straight for the spot in the brain that makes you want to sing along (or drive faster). Kind of a dancy version of The Killers/Bravery. Though they only formed in 2005, they sound well beyond their year of existence. They've toured the West Coast and appeared on national tv, and plan to get their video ("Love Is Dead") on Fuse TV and MTV2. Barely indie by our standards (based upon national retail distribution), but this will change fast as people catch on to their outstanding sound and songs. The band lists its influences as Muse, The Mars Volta, Jimmy Eat World and U2. Those influences aren't that strong at first listen to their 6-song debut EP, but make sense and can subtly be felt. (Doug Van Pelt)

bloodonthetracksmusic.com

Kim Taylor

Great voice and really good songs. Leigh Nash meets Sheryl Crow? This girl writes poetry with feeling. She captures that vibrant thing called life, sometimes using the language of spirit to describe the flesh. In 2005 she toured as support and background vocalist/guitarist for Over The Rhine. This name is definitely one worth remembering. (DV)

kim-taylor.net

Larry Perry

This old blues dog has been slinging his six-string around Austin for years, although he seemed to have disappeared for nearly a decade. Part Of Me is 10 songs that vary from goofy countrified songs that you'd hear in an Elementary School assembly, but other parts are rocking and vibing like Robin Trower or Ronnie Montrose with deep, soulful blues. A mixed bag, but oozing with talent. (DV)

larryperrymusic.com

Bombing Adam

Finding a memorable song - a real one (that you actually remember) is a rare find within the glut of indie/unsigned band demos that we get here each issue. But Bombing Adam have done that with "Nagasaki" from their 4-song EP. They deliver mid-90's pop punk with simplistic, but good hooks. (DV)

bombingadam.com

Runway 36

Pretty solid yet varied sounds (and vocals) with wild swings between cool modern rock and really sappy (but garage-y), happy rock; like the White Stripes-ish "All For Show" and the Franz Ferdinand-ic rollicking riff in "Everlasting." A cool band, but schizophrenic. (DV)

runway36.net

SpacePilot

Quality jams. Weird vocals. If Hundred Year Storm did a Radiohead covers album with The Myriad and Copeland, it might go in this atmospheric yet verse/chorus, verse/chorus direction. (DV)

spacepilot.tv

Betrayed By A Kiss

These guys have good songs and a heavy, raging metal-core sound that's both delivered in a live setting and on their *The Bride Wore Red* 5-song EP. (DV)

betrayedbyakiss.net

Shisho

While their name sounds like a Buddhist chant, these goofballs offer crazy mixes that are awesome, fun, and mega-silly. They cover the Mike Knott tune, "Daddy's Womp" and do a "Basement Mash-Up" mix called "Disco Brandtson." I told ya they were crazy... (DV)

shisho.info

Deep Sea Diving

I had a chance to see these guys tear it up during their brief Texas tour with BBAK, and they bring the noise-core like NJ. (DV)

thephlegmatics.com

Dylan Donkin

This singer/songwriter has flat-out got it going on. He's awesome, great, and has a Brian Wilson-like voice and a Cobain-esque penchant for smart songwriting. (DV)

dylandonkin.com

Destertor

Intense and fast heavy metal with growling vocals en espanol o portuegeuse... No se, pero es muy bueno. (DV)

desertor.com.br

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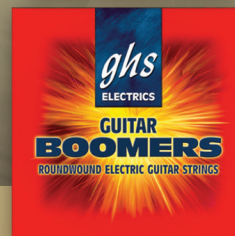
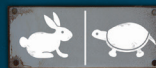
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- G.K. Chesterton